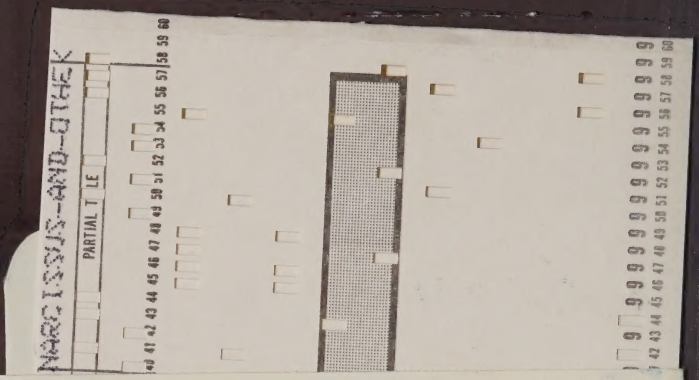
NARCISSUS

AND OTHER POEMS



THE LIBRARY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF
NORTH CAROLINA

ENDOWED BY THE
DIALECTIC AND PHILANTHROPIC
SOCIETIES

PR4451
.N3
1873

UNIVERSITY OF N.C. AT CHAPEL HILL
00014388619

This book is due at the LOUIS R. WILSON LIBRARY on the last date stamped under "Date Due." If not on hold it may be renewed by bringing it to the library.

DATE DUE	RET.	DATE DUE	RET.
JUN 14 1981	JUN 15 '81		
NOV 10 1997			
NOV 11 '97			
DEC 11 1997			
	DEC 09 1997		
	RECEIVED MAR 17 2020		

Form No. 513

This copy was purchased with my Carpenter autograph memorial (Bournemouth 1961) but it appears not to have any distinctive feature

NARCISSUS

AND OTHER POEMS

PR4451
.N3
1873

BY

E. CARPENTER

AA
C

HENRY S. KING & CO.
65 CORNHILL & 12 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON
1873

(*All rights reserved*)

TO

L. C.

This I give thee: to betoken
Love, whereby thy life has bound me.
If I speak, the spell is broken:
Silent love shall still surround thee.

THE UNIVERSITY OF
NORTH CAROLINA
AT CHAPEL HILL
LIBRARY

PURCHASED ON THE

DR. AND MRS.
JOSEPH EZEKIEL POGUE
ENDOWMENT FUND

CONTENTS.

PAGE

NARCISSUS 1

PERSEPHONE. 21

ELFLAND : A FAIRY INTERMEZZO 55

EARTH'S VOICES 85

WHO COMES WITH ME 111

IN A CANOE 114

THE ARTIST TO HIS LADY 117

VENUS APHRODITE 119

SLEEPING VENUS 125

A SUMMER DAY 127

PAGE

THE PEAK OF TERROR 130

THE VEILED ISIS: OR THE NATURE WORSHIPPER . 132

THE DAISY 137

THE TIDE 139

I. THE SPIRIT OF THE MOUNTAIN TORRENT . . 140

II. THE SPIRIT OF MAN 142

SUMMER LIGHTNING 144

IN THE GRASS: BY A MONAD 147

WIND AND CLOUD 152

SUMMER 154

THE WORLD SPIRIT 156

A MEMORY. TO ——. 160

A HAWKWEED 163

BY THE MOUTH OF THE ARNO 164

SONG OF LOVE 165

A PORTRAIT 169

LOVE'S SPRING 171

SONG: LOVE'S FAREWELL 173

SONG: LOVE ONE SUMMER DAY 174

SONG: THROUGH, THROUGH AND THROUGH . . 176

PAGE

As Round a Lighthouse. To —— 178

Sleep, Sweetly Sleep 180

To L. C. 182

The Complaint of Job: Ch. III. 183

The Evernew 187

A Life 189

The Snowdrop 193

On a Crucifix: in the Church of S. John Lateran, Rome 196

The Great Peepshow 202

The Carpenter and the King 209

The Locomotive 212

A Prophecy 215

Only a Smile 216

The Fellowship of Humanity 217

The Fellowship of Suffering 219

The Divine Sorrow 221

The Divine Love 223

The Angel of Death—and Life 225

PAGE

SONNETS :

I. GENOA 231

II. BEETHOVEN 232

III. IN MORTEM. F. D. MAURICE . . . 233

IV. WILLIAM SMITH: AUTHOR OF 'THORNDALE,' ETC. 234

V. INSCRIBED ON A GRAVE 235

VI. DEATH 236

VII. 237

VIII. 238

IX. 239

X. SEVERANCE 240

XI. TO A FAINT SOUL 241

XII. THE LARGER LIFE 242

XIII. IT SHALL BE 243

XIV. WALDSTEIN SONATA. BEETHOVEN . . 244

NARCISSUS.

NARCISSUS.

Once when the golden day had dawned and died,
Narcissus, lily-cradled by the side
Of silver-waved Cephissus, whose soft sheen
Day-long divides his meadow-margins green,
Was found by woodland nymphs. Him, for the sake
Of his famed river-father—wont to slake
Their thirst beside his fountains—and his own
Exceeding beauty thus ere boyhood shown,
Unto their forest haunts they nimbly took,
And nurtured in a leaf-entangled nook.
And day by day the boy in form and face
Grew fairer, by the myriad waving grace
Of slender arms encircled—grew to be
More comely than the gods did e'er decree
To mortal man before. His beauty was
The beauty of a tall flower in the grass

Where-o'er the golden hours glide one by one,
Steeped in sweet slumbers of the golden sun,
A dream-fed beauty: in those night-black eyes
Lay undiscovered realms of rich surprise,
Whereto the broad and overarching brows
Were like the entrance of a stately house.
And round about the lips a light smile ran
That lingered there and would be gone a span,
But never far. So fair Endymion showed
To lonely-souled Selene when she glowed
All night above him in his land of rest,
Latmos below the sun-illumined West,
And all her thin and silver beauty turned
To burnished gold as o'er his cloud-hung bed she yearned.

Among the mountain gorges far withdrawn,
Unvisited save by the feet of Dawn,
Where lofty lone Parnassus lifts his peak
Supreme in snow, speckless of stain or streak,—
A white and dazzling wonder, to defy
The midnoon splendour of the deep blue sky—
There spreads a shelving lake. The valley there
Lays out its sunny slopes to light and air

Crowned with eternal forest: fir and pine
With silver birch and maple intertwine
Dense-clustered boughs, and companies of beech
Their suppliant red-tipped fingers heavenward reach.
But all about, as if the earth in sport
Ran riot of her riches, every sort
Of flowering shrub and dainty flower is seen
To deck those lawny dells and coverts green.
There crimson-tipped anemone, and white
Lily and asphodel glitter in the light;
Blue fields of hyacinth, spread lower down,
The languid sense in luscious odours drown;
Rose, mountain-rowan and acacia vie
Each with the other to enchant the eye
Of way-worn shepherds; thick-sown are the meads
With purple-petalled saffron; and the reeds
With spears of yellow iris-bloom are set
And modest flowers of blue marsh violet.
This at the lower margin; but the lake
Where swift Cephissus enters it doth take
More gloomy featuring; its flood is pent
Within a black precipitous rock-rent
Of bleak Parnassus. There the livelong day
Behind an angle, weather-scarped and grey,

Secluded in its blue mist-circled halls
A high foam-laden cataract falls and falls;
And from the sunny margin far remote,
Sometimes at eventide when every note
Of strenuous cicala chirping shrill
Is hushed, and loud melodious birds are still,
Across the calm lake-surface wind-unstirred
A low continuous sweet sound is heard—
The music of the silver cataract
In rhythmic pulse and soft repeated tact
Sleepladen; for whoever listens long
To that delicious far undying song
Treads a dream-haunted labyrinthine ground
And swiftly falls into forgetfulness profound.

Thither one noon Narcissus, dream-content,
His wayward slowly wandering footsteps bent.
Of love for him lone nymphs ere this had died:
Their beauty and their breath—together sighed
Upon the breeze for him—ere this had shed
A distant cloud-like lustre round his head;
Who all the while with half-averted look
The pleasant laughter and the dance forsook,
Cared not for winning smile, or wistful eye,

Or swift encounter of fair looks whereby
A wavering heart is won ; for him no charm
Had rosy limb, or slender arching arm,
Or passionate device of perplext love,
Of any nymph in woodland, lawn, or grove,
This side of Mount Parnassus. But it seemed
As though some fair forgotten image gleamed,
Haunting the crystal caverns of his mind
In beauty undiminished, undivined.
Then to himself he sang: 'O pleasant hours
Arching the earth like rainbow after showers
In sweet perpetual round, roam lightly on,
Bring vernal songs, bring summer, bring the sun,
Bring fresh and rosy flowers, all that is fair,
To fill the fragrant kingdoms of the air:
But when with sandals loosed and feet unshod
Ye pace the darkened chambers of your God,
Bring me—delay not—down the heavenly steep
Not troublous Love but sweet and dreamless sleep.'

And through the still hot air his music rang
In bell-like tones, high, plaintive, as he sang,
Which on the waveless lake from shore to shore
Fell like foam-bubbles on a damask floor,

Floating and bounding onward till they died
Upon the distant crag-encircled tide :
Where they awoke an answering echo sweet
Which fluttered back and perished at Narcissus' feet.

For all amid the crags remote from view,
Enfolded in a fairy curtain blue,
Just where the rock 'neath overhanging boughs
Steepfalling to the water's edge allows
No footspace for a goat or fallow deer,
But all its grooves and angles and its sheer
Black shining faces are with dew besprent
Of falling waters in loud tournament,
There is a niche. Hart's-tongue and maidenhair
There hide their frondage from the troubled air ;
The slender harebell rimed with dewy flakes
Nods to and fro ; and evermore there breaks
Upon its rocky sides a sea of sound
That roars with loud reverberation round.
For like a pearly ocean-moulded shell
Deepwinding inwards is that rockhewn cell,
Wherein all day the listener may hear
The murmurs of the outer world made clear

In ceaseless iteration. Here her home
The maiden Echo made. Her bath the foam
Of unseen waters, and her bed the rock
Raincurtained and fernbraided ; for her frock
She wove the changeful iris hues, and set
A silver girdle with an amber fret.
Pale was she : by the dewy mist and air
Made like a water-spirit light and rare ;
Pale blue her eyes ; her features laughter-lined,
Yet white like one who of the lonely wind
Had made a playmate ; very cold her mien
Yet by a sad and distant smile, star-keen,
At times transpierced ; her step assured and swift,
As on her task through windswept chasm and rift
She plied white feet ; and over all her hair
Hung back in cloud-bejewelled tresses fair.

Unseen of man she dwelt. No mortal eye
Had looked upon her life ; yet to descry
Her strange and tameless beauty many a one
Had left the high warm uplands of the Sun,
And passed into those caverns cold as grave,
And perished in the fathomless dark wave.

For all day long with high and mocking note
She teased the merry shepherds when they smote
Their palms together, through them hooting shrill
In jubilant reply from hill to hill.
And when they sang, it was her wanton joy
Unto their words to render answer coy;
Till one at last, from ruddy mien and rude,
Would grow lovesick, and leave his wonted food
Untouched, and plain upon the passing wind,
And pray a shepherd mate his flocks to mind.
Then would the nymph his steps astray beguile,
And hide his eyes from day's returning smile.
This cold fantastic fickle maid that day
Dreambound in unaccustomed slumbers lay
Upon her ferny couch. Her breathing came
And went, quick, fitful, like a flickering flame.
Her face was changed—it seemed her latest freak:
A rose had broke the spell upon her cheek.
And o'er her limbs a wave-like languor swelled
And on her bosom brake, for she beheld
In visionary fancy one unmoved
By all her lures and antics—and she loved.
Beside the far remote lake-marge he stood
And sang; and o'er the level waterflood

His words seemed floating to her single ear—
Through obscure shades and sunlit spaces clear,
And down the dark rocklimits lone and steep—
'Not troublous love, but sweet and dreamless sleep.'
And from her slumbers swiftly she uprose,
But, ere her waking powers she could dispose,
Old fatal use upon her lips did leap,
In loud and mocking accents she made answer 'Sleep.'

Then from the cold clear gloom she turned her face
Upward, between those walls—a moment's space—
And saw o'erhead the hot and dazzling sky
Sharp-sundered by the forest-fringes high,
And for that bright unblemished upper land
Longing, and bold because the breezes fanned
Her forehead, from her lonely home she crept,
And out into the sunlight lightly stept;
Where, from a heathery bee-haunted slope,
The valley of her vision and her hope
She viewed with actual eye. Yet stayed not here,
But downwards to the meadows by the mere
Went through the dry sweet grass. But now the Sun
His toilsome heavenward ascent had done,

And pausing for a while upon the height
Flung wide o'er all the earth his arrowy light ;
Then westward went, another golden hour
Shining with intense undiminished power.
Hot was the air ; no sound the sultry time
Gave but the silvery insistent chime
Of shoreward ripples, though the white lake-face
Showed not of wandering wind or wave a trace.
Betwixt the green and glassy worlds she went—
The rock nymph Echo—on her love intent ;
Her feet within the wave-washed fringes wet,
Her face against the sun's full splendour set,
Nor careful, till most suddenly the heat
Shot needles from her shoulders to her feet,
And on her head the sunbeams seemed to beat
Intolerable rhythm. And as from trance
Awaking, to her half-confounded glance
The world appeared to reel in senseless swound,
While o'er her path the awful Sungod frowned
Absolute prohibition. Yet she took
No heeding of his fierce forbidding look,
But disobedient to the high behest
On to her own destruction proudly pressed.

For this fair sprite, whose fit and only home
Had been shade-curtained crags and cooling foam,
In the intense glare wasted all her strength
And thinned into a shadow, till at length
Her form grew bodiless, and she became
White and translucent like a taper flame
Set in the sunlight. So the dew is seen
On summer morns to vanish from the green ;
So written characters cast on the fire
Lose substance but not form ; so when the lyre
Is softly struck, and all the strings are still,
The sound moves on. So moved her stedfast will.
And by the marshes where the moorhen breeds
Among bulrushes and red-flowering reeds,
And by the sunny overhanging banks
Where all day long fieldmice are full of pranks
And swift kingfishers dart below and pass
Into their tunnelled homes beneath the grass,
She fled swiftfooted ; and you might have said
A moonlike glamour on the ground was shed,
Or that a shimmering light breeze, half spent,
The verdure's myriad slender spires had bent :
Till through a belt of lilacs she did peep
And saw Narcissus on a mossy bank asleep.

One hand held high above her opened wide
A space among the boughs ; against her side
The other seemed to stay her heart's surprise ;
And the thick leafy screen about her eyes
Made sunroom for her seeing. Whereupon,
The instant that her glance upon him shone,
Her ears a slumbrous tune to take did seem:
She saw the lonely singer of her dream.
And so her heart was fashioned unto love.
All fear departed, yet she did not move,
But for a while beneath the grateful shade
In sweet suspense of eye and ear delayed.
Some Dryad, whom the wanton Satyrs chase,
Well nigh exhausted in the breathless race,
Yet holding heart and breath, doubting she sees
Or hears some movement in the sheltering trees,
This might have been, so eager and intense
Her gaze in Love's preoccupant suspense.
Not five footpaces of the sunlit lawn
The waveborn youth lay from the maid withdrawn.
One hand half-buried in thick-clustered hair
Made slumber easy, on his forehead bare
The now declining sunbeams softly fell,
And peace upon the landscape seemed to dwell.

Then from her leafy shade she lightly stept,
And, standing o'er him, like a love-adept
Sang—

O fond singer of an hour,
If thy passing note had power
  Thus to hold me; then thy heart
Surely must contain some charm
Fit to fend off Love's alarm,
  Fit to heal Love's hateful smart.

Yet I perish in Love's pain,
I who once was wont to feign
  Coldness of my native lake,
And for thee, who in thy pride
Love's delight hast e'er denied,
  Wait imploring till thou wake.

O beware, fair singer; Sleep
All about thy limbs doth creep:
  Keep afar her cunning art;
For she loves thee and will use
All her lures, until thou lose
  Even unto her thy heart.

And with a sudden start, as though he heard
Among the lilacs a love-laden bird
Rehearsing human tones, Narcissus woke
Wide eyed—and saw not aught; the ripples broke

Out of a sea of light upon the shore,
And every sight and sound was as before.
For so the Gods (and who can tell their mind,
Equal, unequal, seeing they can bind
Mortals, but over them is no control
Till Fate o'ertake them at the final goal)
Or justly for her penalty declared
The pain she oft for others had prepared,
Or for their own devices, or of spite—
Perchance being jealous of their proper light—
Had willed this end for Echo, that she waned
Till but the shadow of herself remained,
Which young Narcissus saw not; for he rose
And unregarding passed the fair nymph close,
And went unto the water's edge, and stood
Watching the other world within the flood.

Then Echo turned away, and in her grief,
Seeing the end too surely, sought relief
In darkness and the shadow of a grove,
Whereto she told her first last only love,
And all night long beneath the flying Moon
Made melancholy plaining. But so soon

As morning came—and with it dawn of hope—
With her distressful fancies did she cope,
And went to seek Narcissus. So six days
She teased him in and out the woodland ways,
And now would scatter roses for his bed,
Relenting, now would mimic all he said,
Saying Echo, Echo, in her lightest tone;
And oft at midnoon, in a hollow stone,
Brought icy water from a crystal well,
Or lilies from some moist and shady dell.
For all he knew her not, but turned aside,
And evermore regarded but the glassy tide.

Then on the seventh day she saw the Fate
Throw wide for her its final gloomy gate;
And turning on itself her life down went
Through all the sharp degrees of pain's descent
To Death: for Anger and great grief had sped
The end of passion, and her heart was dead.
So throwing out her arms upon the gale
She cried unto the Gods with grievous wail,
And cursed the careless lord of her desire,
And said: 'Let the same unremitting fire

Devour thy heart and mine: for I must die.'
And with a sharp and ominous loud sigh
Backward upon the breezes from the bank
She fled, and into the blue distance sank.

And on Narcissus fell the fair nymph's ban;
For while within the waters he did scan
Some dreamworld wonder, in that lake-born land
Dimly discerning his own image stand,
He knew it not; but deemed that some fair maid
Upon the nether meadow-marge delayed,
And in love-cravings for that unattained
Fanciful beauty, his own beauty waned
And wasted with desire unsatisfied;
Whereof at length himself had surely died,
But that the Gods took pity in that hour
And so transformed him to the fashion of a flower.

And now each vernal season, when the Sun
His vertical high course begins to run,
When midday Zephyrs dream beside the rill,
And the lake from an overhanging hill
Looks like the entrance of another land,
Upon its sunny bank is seen to stand

A fragrant flower whose white and golden eye
Peers at its own pale image mournfully,
And, long ere Philomel forsakes her sighs,
Pines on its slender stem and falls and dies.
And, as the changes of the world go by,
About that land ofttimes is heard a cry
Like thin and bitter laughter, wheresoe'er
Among her lonely crags and caverns bare,
Now bodiless and dwindled to a sound,
Heart-broken Echo mocks the starry night profound.

PERSEPHONE.

PERSEPHONE.

On high Olympus, where the great Gods hold
Council and converse all the days of gold,
The air, inviolate of mortal breath,
Is very still, more still than aught but death,
Save life—such radiant life as Gods enjoy.
For all delights that mortals dream of cloy
The feeble human sense to weariness,
Which faints, like some frail insect in a mess
Compact of honey and all luscious things;
But from the God ethereal there springs
A power so keen, so vivid, and so bright,
That like the Sun's intense pervading light
It searches the inert from end to end,
And nothing leaves with which it does not blend
Into a garment of enjoyment. So
They, the Gods, noting all the ebb and flow

Of this fair world, feeling with implicate
Fingers of sense outstretched the delicate
Delight of every light-thrill on the breeze,
Or hearing shocks of nations and of seas,
As heavenward for help they heave and cry,
Know, understand, but are not moved thereby :
For passion is part-knowledge, but they know
Past all misprision. Therefore doth there go
About Olympus' top such balm of air
As mortals, comprehending not, compare
To summer mornings of the later June ;
Yet is it brighter, warmer, as a tune
Played on Apollo's god-lyre might surpass
The same flute-laboured of faun Marsyas.
All day in showers the golden-flaked sunshine
Floats downward through a liquid crystalline
Ocean of air, which, scarcely heaving, breaks
In balmy kisses where each forehead shakes
To right and left from white ambrosial brows
Its waving fringe. No rude intrusions rouse
This quiet that the Gods hold for their own,
But they can hear like a far distant tone
The murmurs and the music of the Earth—
Its lamentations and high tones of mirth,

Loud sylvan choruses and lonely song,
Lowings and bleatings of the herded throng,
Faint cockcrow and impatient fitful bark
Of shepherd hound wherever he may mark
A sheep astray, the shoreward sound of seas
And shout of broken battle—all of these
Half lost in air, save when a lark sometimes,
With beating heart and pinions heavenward climbs,
And holds immortals from their proper bliss
To listen to that earthborn song of his.
But when they would be free of Earth and men,
Pursuing their own paths past mortal ken,
They spread the soft white carpet of the clouds
About their feet, which underneath enshrouds
Earth's darkened races from the risen day;
Who deem the sun spoiled of his proper sway,
Nor know nor guess he holds his dazzling court
High overhead with Gods in god-like sport.
For there, sunsmitten, the white spotless plain
Spreads far and wide, smooth-billowed like the main,
When, minding stormy weather in the still,
It breaks, and fringes with a white foam-frill
Each island rock. So here the white mist breaks
Upwards on purple pinnacles and peaks,

Marking the limits of the land and sea ;
And overhead the azure canopy
Is limitless pure light. The happy hours,
Each garlanded with crown of stars and flowers,
Here tarry from their swift earth-circling flight ;
Venus unyokes her doves, and out of sight
Zeus puts his bolted fire ; proud Hera yields
Her haughty seat, and o'er the silver fields
In equal converse all the Gods do go
With Loves and Zephyrs and the nectar flow
Of God-created laughter, more divine
Than nectar and more sweet than Cyprus wine.

Yet since all things, each by its opposite,
Are known, and light without dark is not light,
Nor day without night day, nor things divine
Divine, until experience refine
Good out of ill endured and life from death—
Since this at least our mortal wisdom saith
(For what and how the Gods themselves discern
We know not)—therefore whosoever turn
His footing from the sunlight, close at hand
Shall have quick entrance to the sunless land,

And tread the realms of darkness, absolute,
Dread, limitless, deep, undisturbed and mute ;
Whose king is Hades. For when first the plains
Of sun and shadow into separate reigns
Were broken, he, being born of equal birth
With Zeus his brother, took the hollow Earth
And caves of Night and Silence for his own,
Leaving the light and land of all things shown
Unto the other ; while between the twain
The neutral twilight-circled dusky plain
Was left for men. And each man whosoe'er
Moves bordering both worlds and can declare
Some part in each : for 'twixt them like a gate
His eyelids stand, which, soon as they dilate,
Suffer himself to pass their crystal doors
Into the upper land wherein he soars
Light-charioted like a God—God Zeus to wit :
But when those lids are closed, his soul doth sit
Contemplative and calm within its own
Infinite realm of thought upon the throne
Of night—and Hades ; therefore, when men die,
Their friends make fast those jewelled doors whereby
The soul may never more return, and say
That to the realms of Hades it takes way.

Such is that land, serene-lit like a gem
Of purest night set in the diadem
Of its own monarch—a black diamond,—
In silence beautiful, and sense of fond
Large melancholy, restful in its gloom
And quiet liberty of spacious room,
Yet rousing fancy with its forms foreseen,
Forethought, foreboded down each deep ravine
And unexplored broad valley : who may know
What shapes about that wilderness do go?
Since Hades here doth hold all essences
And seeds of things, for Zeus at length to bless
To manifest fruition ;—folded here
Lie slender-branching fern and wheaten ear,
All acts of men and famous enterprise—
As new lands lie in voyager's surmise—
Waiting the light to shape them. And rich store
He has in keeping : gold and silver ore,
And jewels Earth-embowelled in deep mines,
Which are not jewels, for no sparkle shines
Or has shone in them since the primal night,
Mountains of porphyry and malachite,
Opal and alabaster, and a hoard
Of turquoise, jade and cat's-eye cavern-stored.

Such is the wealth of Hades—and the mind,
Which yet is formless, valueless, till signed
And shapen by the sunlight into sight;
Just so within a marble block the might
Of fine prophetic fancy doth foreshow
The emprisoned form, which no one yet may know
Until the sculptor, taking tool in hand,
Sets free the statue from its stony band.

Now how from these two worlds, like friendly foes,
The yearly seasonable change arose
Of summer into winter, and why Earth
In Spring and Autumn signifies the birth
And death of all her children—or their sleep—
Was on this wise. For from Olympus' steep,
When parts their cloudy floor, the Gods can see
Laid out beneath them in fair spaces free
Mountain and valley and far meadowland,
Of sunny beauty, like a garden planned
In miniature: the forest foliage seems
Rich moss, no more, where, following the streams,
It dimples down each hillside; and the fields,
With many-coloured crops of various yields,

Lie like a robe which Ceres, passing by,
Had flung aside because the sun was high;
And then they trace the girdle of her land,
Broad ocean blue with silver-braided strand,
That flows about the world and makes it one,—
And listen for its song. And when the sun
Is near its watery edge, early or late,
And rude winds have forgot the day's debate,
They see a thousand incense-columns tall
Rise through the sultry air and range and fall
In wreaths of incense round Olympus' head;
And all are gladdened since the Gods are glad.
In those days girlish summer, rosy-crowned,
Circled her flowery sparkling wine-cup round
The whole bright year—nor was Demeter sad;
But now, with tears as well as laughter clad,
Whole months the mother of our corn and wine
Bewails her lost delight, fair Proserpine.

'Twas on a day when all the woods were green
And shady in the sun's meridian sheen—
A fitful light breeze swept the cool hillside,
And in the nearest valley dropt and died—

That rich Demeter from her gracious toil,
Whereby for man she fills the stubborn soil
With energy divine and fruitful grace,
Rested awhile. Upon her blooming face,
Prodigal of love in smiling motherhood,
And on her flaxen hair the arching wood
Threw grateful twilight, while with happy gaze
She viewed her work—rich fields of golden maize,
White wheat and waving oats, meads stocked with kine,
Olive and orange groves, and slopes of vine.
And at her side her gentle lovely child
Caught up the smile of earth and gazed and smiled
With rarer grace, more like the wreathen flowers
That, twined among her tresses, in sweet showers
Fell all about her as she moved her feet.
White robes she wore, blue-girdled, as to greet
Companionship of sunbeams and the sun,
Which round about her form did float and run,
As round a ripe peach on a southern wall;
Yet maidenly and slender, and in all
Her movements swift and modest, with the free
Magic of unexpected fire, was she,
Persephone, whom some call Proserpine.

Then, sudden gazing in the face benign
Of fond Demeter, as if some quick stroke
Of fancy so enforced it, thus she spoke:—
'O mother dear, goddess of earthward care,
I know a meadow where the flowers are fair
With morning and the light upon their leaves;
Why linger 'mid the wine-vats and fat sheaves?
Come downward where the flowers are free of care.'
'They know my voice, and hear me when I call,
And, as in some melodious madrigal,
Make answer down their choral lines of beauty,
Welcome on welcome waved in loyal duty:
Come hearken to that flowery madrigal.'

Then spake the mother of the fruitful earth:
'O child, beloved and beautiful from birth,
I cannot leave these nurslings of my care:
The wells would choke, the plodding slow ploughshare
Would stumble in the furrow, the ripe seed
Forget with tiny outstretched arms to plead
For sunshine and enrichment of its dye,
And all that mortals seek and I supply
Fail in the general famine. But do thou,
If thou wilt, go, and, if thou wilt, go now,

Alone; for though I would not thou shouldst leave
The circle of my love, I will not grieve
Thy heart by prohibition. And the height
Commands the valley, and will grant me sight
Of all thy flowery gladness.' So she went,
Persephone, and passed the woodland pent
And overhanging vines and orchard closes
And waving cornlands hedged about with roses,
Until a flowery mead received her feet
With soft close kiss and answering fragrance sweet.
These are the plains of Enna. Summer here
Holds her chief court, and dwells without a peer
In pensive beauty. Quiet is the land,
And sacred to her presence, unprofaned
By mortal tread; and whether days are clear
Or cloudy, on the limit doth appear
A moonlike light, where the far sea unseen
Fringes the sun-crowned sky with reflex sheen.
But now the sultry mead from midnoon blaze
Was curtained by a cloud, round which the rays
Rained in a silver shower: their circling made
A shining-columned temple of pure shade,
Wherein Persephone, in single grace,
Stood like a flowery genius of the place,

And sang:

Children of the shining meadow,
Thousand-coloured like the sun,
Sun-compact of light and shadow,
Beauty-shapen every one;

On the heatflood lightly floating
Cherub chins and eyes so coy,
In gay thousands, as for noting
Summer's self surprised with joy:

Summer in your smiling glances
Finds her happy self again,
Dances with you in your dances
Over mountain-pass and plain;

Lingers with you in the meadow,
Wreathes your fragrance round her feet,
Far and wide, till light and shadow
Tremble in the incense sweet;

Prays your thousands to this trysting
Come in glittering array,
Nodding, smiling, still insisting
Summer shall not pass away.

And as she sang, about her feet the mead
Of gold and purple made a flowery brede;
The air, impassioned with a myriad hues,
O'er all her snow-white raiment did diffuse

Love-tinted splendours; to attain her head
A cloudy fragrance climbed, and thence was shed
Wave-like at every lightest motion; where
Clusters of hyacinth clung to her hair,
Over and past her like a flying veil
A rose shed all its petals on the gale,
And rustling with delight her footsteps fell
Upon the happy fields of asphodel.

But not alone Demeter on the height
Beheld that day's rejoicing; for delight
Had seized King Hades in his lonely home,
What time his vacant eyes, long used to roam
About the void with introvertive air,
Were dazzled to a keen and pointed stare
By that sweet revelation—summer-clad
Persephone. The magic vision had
One meaning only for him—love: the doubt,
The vague mist-phantoms of his mind went out
Utterly in that light: he waited not
An instant, e'en for casting of a lot,
But calling to his aid all earth and air,
Wind, fire, and thunder, from their cloudy lair,

Darkness and rain, and lurid red eclipse,
With signifying eyes and silent lips
He leapt into his chariot, black as night,
With nightblack horses harnessed, bade a sprite
Fling wide the doors of Hell, and sprang amain
To meet Persephone upon the plain.
Who, at that sight, fulfilled with sudden dread,
Swooned out of all sensation as one dead,
And earthward fell, while o'er her flowery crew
A grey cold shiver in wide circles flew,
As o'er the clouds of sunset, when the sun
Faints in eclipse before its course is run.
And in that moment with rapacious hand
He, Hades, swept her from the trembling land,
And for his paramour and consort bore
Her to the realms of gloom and silence sore.

Oft thus grey Winter in the waning year
With roaring winds and retinue of fear
Sweeps o'er the world; and ere its icy blast,
Black-ominous of death, be overpast,
Some child of sunlight, a blue smiling flower,
Lies lifeless where the lurid storm-clouds lower;

And, frozen earthwards, finds the days no more
That happy Summer in her sandals bore,
But lingers ice-bound in rude Winter's prison
Till life-redeeming Spring be rearisen.

So now Demeter's mother-heart with fear
Beat loudly high; for from her mountain sheer
She saw a dismal cloud close densely down
Upon Persephone; then rain did drown
All sight and sunlight, till a sudden crash
Rang, as of thunder, with a lurid flash;
Whereafter silence, till a friendless wind
Broke from the mountain-summits far behind,
And swept the plain, now desolate in dearth
Of flower or maid, or any mark of mirth.
In that day all the land seemed desolate.
Demeter rose; the smile that sat in state
Upon her face, like light upon the sun,
Had faded, and instead her eyes had won
A wondering far look of lonely grief,
Not without scorn, because e'en Zeus, the chief
Of Gods, seemed blemished in authority
By this bereavement. For both earth and sky

Grew gloomier; and where the Goddess stood
Dead leaves hissed by her from the withered wood,
The shrivelled grass showed brown beneath her feet,
And died, the rainy air was mixed with sleet,
And from each tree sweet fruit fell with a thud,
While every blossom perished ere the bud.
So, like the moon, when on a rainy night
It hastens through the clouds with ragged light,
Revealing half an outline and no more,
She lit a torch, and, of despair pressed sore,
By once flower-garlanded familiar ways
Hastened along the land; and for amaze
Knew nought of what this strange mishap might be,
But only that she sought Persephone.

And daily Earth declined from its estate;
For now the gracious mother, wont to wait
Upon its every need, forgot her care:
A nipping frost, favoured by sunless air,
Blackened the tender blade; the woodland deer,
Breaking their limits, browsed each slender spear
Of forecome wheat and barley, and a blight
Ate up the whole year's bloom; the peasant wight

Left off to trim and tie his leafless vine,
Turned from the dying crops and air malign
Into his cottage shelter, and besought
The careless Gods to stay the ruin wrought,
Where, all without, the hedgeless fields, forlorn
Of any fruit, by wind and rain were torn,
And furrowed in strange fashion like a sea.
So after many days, spent wearily
In hapless wanderings, Demeter heard
A voice about the dark, as of a bird
Singing ere dawn, and took some hope therefrom;
And when unto the singer she was come,
Holding her torch on high, for 'twas dead night,
She saw pale Hecate, in raiment white,
Peering about the land in search of charms
For secret uses, whom, with pleading arms,
She cried unto: 'O skilful Hecate,
To whom night is as day, for thou canst see
Things hidden from thy brother the broad sun,
Thou surely hast beheld, and sought and won
Some comfort for me. For a robber fate
Of my loved child has left me desolate,
And all the land weeps with me while I weep,
And wonder what uncompassed kingdoms keep

Her from me—by what means I compass not,
And cannot even image into thought.'
To whom spake Hecate: 'I know, indeed,
The land is broken by thy bitter need;
I know the nightly dews have ceased to fall,
And Earth is covered by a cloudy pall,
Like some huge bier, whereo'er the sombre rain
Weeps as a strong man mourning weeps for pain;
I know Earth's nursling plants are turning grey
And shrivelling in premature decay
For faintness of sheer grief, yet know I not
More than the bare occasion: while I wrought
In my own eastern fields, I heard a cry,
And saw Persephone, yet long ere I
Could shape sight into certainty a cloud
Fell round her, with earth-thunder deep and loud,
A tongue of fire leapt through it; so she passed.
And whether Hades snatched her to his vast
Unuttered realms, or aged doting Zeus
A careless bolt upon her head did loose,
I cannot guess. But go thou—nor be faint—
To the all-seeing God: he shall acquaint
Thee without fail, for nought from him is hid,
Helios, the sun, whose bright and level lid

Tries all things, searching out the light from dark,
And truth from falsehood; doubtless did he mark
And will make plain.'
So brave Demeter went
Eastward to seek the sungod's glowing tent,
And found him as he tarried on the hills
One stroke ere dawn; and as a rose distils
A cloud of fragrance for its own delight,
So was he clad self-luminous in light,
Gracious to look on. Unto whom she spake
'Dear God of heaven, who art wont to make
The whole earth happy with thy smiling brow,
And rich in thine embraces, seeing now
The trees are weeping and the land is bare,
Hast thou forgotten all thy ancient care,
Me thy once loved companion, her my child,
Thy child almost, on whom thy face first smiled,
Summer-delighting lost Persephone?'
To whom made answer Helios: 'What I see,
O well-belovèd Goddess, is not mine
In act, but in sight only: I incline
My eyes about the earth and issues know
Which only Zeus ordains; and wherefore now

This evil on the land he doth permit
I comprehend not, though I mourn for it.
Hades, hierarch of darkness, on that day
Filched from my kingdoms to his caverns grey
Thy beautiful beloved—beloved of him—
And sets her now high in his palace dim
To be his queen. Go thou to kingly Zeus,
And bid him on his thievish brother loose
His hottest bolt ; and thou meanwhile take heart,
For I, with flashing spear and fiery dart,
Will lie in wait by Hades' gloomy tent
Revolving sudden vengeance.' So she went,
Demeter, with bowed head and heart grief-riven,
Along the great ascent which leads to heaven.

Meanwhile the cloudy caverns of the Earth
Re-echoed to unwonted tones of mirth
Down all their hollow arches : gnome and sprite
Crept from their crannies to behold the light
Where, in his palace court, dusk heralds cried
The joy of Hades with his shining bride.
For all about her, like a dazzling mist,
The breath of summer closely clung, and kissed

Her tender limbs with tints that shot and crossed
From shadowy aisle to aisle, until they lost
Themselves among those labyrinthine ways.
And darkness first in summer's tempered rays
Discerned itself: the pale and formless shades
That glide unconscious through those vacant glades
Gazed on each other, and were made aware
Of unexpressed desires; the stagnant air
Felt for its limits through the vaulted gloom
And trembled like a spirit freed from doom;
The Furies and the Harpy-birds that haunt
The caves of Death, whom no foul sight can daunt,
Shrank when they mirrored in each other's mien
Their own distortion; the great deep unseen
Fell open inwards: and Hades himself,
With the same wonder as his meanest elf,
Beheld the hidden glories of his land
And gauged his empire. Whereupon he planned
To make Persephone his queen, and set
Her place beside him on a throne of jet
Before his palace portal, for the eye
And centre of his conscious sovereignty.
For like a court before that palace spreads
An open space, where evermore there treads

With silent tremor o'er the sightless fields
Hell's myriad populace : all that earth yields
Of man, or beast, or creature whatsoe'er,
All that hath been or will be, boded there
In bodiless dense movement, speeds its way
To find its own ends and the light of day.
And, all around, the visionary rocks
Break backward in deep lanes whose darkness mocks
The baffled eye, whence evermore appear
Fresh phantoms, undefined, or vague, or clear,
Who join the throng before their monarch's throne
And wait his will or wilful work their own.
And whosoe'er through Hades' palace-gate
Will gaze sees only night ; for all its state
Turns outward, but within is absolute
Bewilderment of vacant space and mute.
And if there be, behind the formal front,
Chambers and halls, or but their semblance on't—
Something or nothing—no man knows aright,
Save that the cloudborn legions of the night
Throng thickest here, and in a livid stream
Pass outwards like the pageant of a dream.

So, when their bridal hour was overpast,
He, Hades, from that palace-portal vast

Led forth Persephone, and in throned state
Set her beside him for his sceptre's mate.
Her chair was carven of a block of jet
Twisted to tangled snakes; for back was set
The semblance of a monstrous bat, whose wings
Folded and fanned her like half-living things;
And his was shapen a Medusa's head,
Whereon himself durst ne'er look, but the dread
Visage stared terror on each trembling one
Who craved for mercy at that dismal throne.
Now when she saw this horror, in her fear
She fell force-emptied; for the wicked leer
Of stark Medusa slew her; and the doom
Of Death and Night was hers which of her bloom
Made melancholy ending. Then the love
That Hades bore her in the realms above
Broke his fierce moody nature; at her feet
He fell and sued forgiveness from the sweet
Closed eyes and parted lips, and cried aloud,
Snatched at his hair, beat breast, and lowly bowed
His head to dust. For all, his rugged hand
Held, like a seashell on some rocky strand,
Her hand yet lifeless. Then with solemn care
He placed her palms in one, and ranged her hair

Each way upon her forehead, whence there slipt
Full many a flower that once her fingers clipt
On Enna's fields—and from her garment's fold,—
All which he gathered, like unvalued gold,
And shed upon her lap. Which duly done,
He let his dusky fingers, one by one,
Dwell on her taintless brow, as if to trace
The pure immortal beauty of her face ;
Whence, passing downwards o'er her slender form,
His huge arms circling clasped her heart, yet warm,
Close to his own, while with deep pleading eyes,
Eager in grief, he gazed on his lost prize.—
And as a child, to soundest slumber charmed,
Sleeps moveless till the mother-soul, alarmed
With vague presentiment of ill, stoops o'er
His tiny couch, watching the blue veins score
The fair white forehead, and the little lips
Breathing? or breathless? till at length she slips
A finger through his light curls, and so breaks
The spell, and chides her false fears as he wakes :
So she awoke from death—or from a trance—
As though called lifeward by love's quickening glance ;
And saw those night-deep orbs, which in their fire
Outshone his diamond-claspt kingly tiar,

Grown starlike in their depths with steadfast love:
A sight which so her troubled mind did move,
That with new courage she renewed her might,
And filled the heart of Hades with delight;
Who on his secret palace-threshold swore
Allegiance to her beauty evermore.
And so the gates of night and death were glad
For many a day, and sober joyance had;
And in Persephone's pale smile the shades
Revived, as flowers do when the sunlight braids
Their rainfaint petals with its vigorous beams.
And Hades at her side poured all his dreams
Into her ear: strange lore he only knew
Of light and darkness, and the livid hue
Which is not either; of the death and birth
Of all created things; and how huge Earth,
With all its furniture, hath yet no frame
Of solid bulk, but is at most a name
For that which marks the margin of two lands—
The lands of sun and shadow,—how it stands
Subject to their alliance, yet of old
How fierce antagonism availed to hold
These realms apart—his from his brother Zeus'.
And then he spake of love, and how its use

Twixt him and her, once being gained and given
(She being daughter of the king of Heaven),
Might have rare answer in an order new
Of actual things ; but chiefly did he sue
Without device of reason, with the skill
Of one who sees and hath no other will
Than what he sees. And she, Persephone,
Hearing her uncouth suitor urge his plea,
Forsook her fears, and, gazing on him long,
For the great love remembered not the wrong ;
But suffered his insistance, and in time
Dwelt with him in his melancholy clime,
Not discontented, and was made the queen
Of all the underworld which is not seen.

Nevertheless, her child-heart inly yearned
After Demeter's lonely state, and turned
Backward upon the past days till she pined
And ever grew of more unquiet mind
And paler countenance ; whereat at last
Hades took fear, foreboding she might cast
Aside allegiance and depart her way.
Therefore he brought her in a dish one day

Pomegranate seeds, that she might eat thereof
And know renewal and return of Love.

Now in this space Demeter, wandering o'er
The desert lands, and daily growing more
Wasted with grief and angered with the Gods,
Came to Olympus, where its grey head nods
Peace on the clustered fields about its feet.
Her cheeks were furrowed, and her hair with sleet
Was knotted, while her garments, loosely hung,
In draggled folds about her figure clung:
Whereat in heaven some flakes of laughter fell.
But she, beholding Zeus, said: 'Is it well,
O Father of the Gods, that ye, who have
The earth in keeping, should create a grave?
For such the world is now. The King of death
Holds cavern-bound my child, and with her breath
All beauty is departed from the land;
Whereat, while tempests score and scorch and brand
The blackened world, ye in your high-built towers
Laugh at your ease, and lead the careless hours
In rounds of revel and dishonest mirth.
Give ear, O mighty Zeus, and, for this dearth

Dulls your high glory, grant Earth's fruit again,
Lest ye be nameless in the homes of men.'
Whose angry suit he heeded not at first,
But, later, when the wretched land was curst
With ruin of high rivers, rot, and blight,
For shame and pity of its mournful plight
He heard, and rendered answer to her prayer.
For Zeus had promised, in the days that were,
The child to Hades, by a secret pact
Hid from the mother, lest she should distract
His politic design thereby to bind
His brother subject by the tie of kind ;
Which purpose now in part frustrated was ;
For when the land fell desolate, because
This was a scandal and a crying shame
To all Olympus, and pretext of blame
To discontented mortals who forsook
Their punctual sacrifices and betook
Themselves to other gods, he broke his word,
And on quick Hermes his commands conferred.

So while, enduring still her rayless doom
Amid the mute assemblies of the gloom,

Persephone was made night's consort, there
Fell sudden on the cavern-vaulted air
A chill of fear, one moment, then the next,
As when a veil of strongly woven text
Is torn asunder, with a sequent roar
Of myriad sharp severance Night shore
Her pitchy roof, and in a ragged crack
Burst open to the light, whose shimmering track
Shot o'er a gloom of faces far and wide.
And in the sunbeams' centre there did ride
Heaven's winged messenger, who seemed to bear
Magic of colour to the sunless air;
For wheresoe'er he looked there leapt a hue,
Crimson and gold, and emerald and blue;
And hell itself was glorious; but he
Stretched hand to hand and held Persephone,
And ere astounded Hades could deny
Swept with her to the land below the sky.
And with her came the children of the Earth:
All faded shapes of beauty had new birth;
Sweet winds before her went, about her flew
Spring's flowers and, where they fell, took root and grew;

And with a clap the earth closed, and King Night
Was left a prisoner in lonely plight.

'Twas on the plain Eleusis where they met,
Mother and child ; and all tearful regret
Was wiped away between them, as they sang
And held each other, and the high world rang
With happy notes ; for far and wide was heard
The song of nearing Spring : each wondering bird
Whistled, and gazed up sunward, and would cease,
And still essayed to sing his heart's increase.
Through sunlit field and orchard, like clear fire,
Gay blossoms brake upon each spray and spire,
And tipped the wizened boughs, which shone like lamps
Sacred to Summer when dark Winter's damps
Are stricken by the sungod's burning bow.
In emerald and white and ruby glow
They heralded abroad high festival,
And filled the land with incense ; at their call
The furrows stood arrayed in ranks of green,
The fields grew bright with poppy, flax, and bean,
Hedgerows and trees with wild and trailing vine
Were gaily garlanded, and for a sign

The lizard sat upon a sunny stone
And watched the hours fall earthward one by one.

So the Earth-mother lost and found again
Her lovely child ; and all the former pain
Came back pure joy. The ways of mortals too
Were blessed because of her : a gracious dew
Fell in rich nights of increase and of calm,
Long mellow days loaded the crops with balm
And healed the wounds of Winter, and the fruit
Broke earthward from each overladen shoot
With noisy promise. Thus the summer passed.
At last came Autumn, and with high hand cast
Earth's harvest o'er its floor. Whereafter, change ;
For, having in the cavern-kingdoms strange
Eaten the seeds of life, Persephone,
Obedient to love's unexpressed decree,
Each year went earthward to renew her might
And bless returning summer with the sight
Of Night's conception. So while winds blew chill,
She dwelt with Hades and the land was still.

ELFLAND:

A FAIRY INTERMEZZO.

PETER	*A mortal.*
QUEEN MAB, PUCK, CANDY, ZEPHYR, THISTLEDOWN	*Fairies.*
ECHO	*A maiden.*

ELFLAND.

Scene I. *A woodland dell.*

Enter Peter *meditatively.*

A stoup of wine is good for many things:
It ravishes the heart of ruined kings
From dumb despair, redeems the yokel wretch
From dreams of scarlet bean and purple vetch,
Frees each man from his own fore-destined star,
Excites to love—and sleep, if love be far.
What matters love? To wile a tedious day
'Tis well devised, but if a man should say
'Tis more than that, why he and I must part.
They rave who rage of death and broken heart;
To no inclemencies doth Love incline,
And if he did—Heigh ho! a stoup of wine! . . .

How dizzily in dots the sunlight dances!
It fills the mazy brain with sleepy fancies.
And Philomel is not herself: her song
Is routed by its own rebellious throng.
Heavens! what a clamour. Peace! the bird is mad;
Such rupture of one's reasoning 's too bad.
But here's a space, a bank not over steep,
I'll rest a moment, muse, it may be, sleep.

(*Reclines and presently sleeps.*)

(*Bugle within, and sound of the evening breeze. Down a blue forest glade, and swiftly borne in mid-air like a many-coloured cloud, comes a train of woodland elves.* QUEEN MAB *alights in the centre of the mossy hollow.*)

Q. Mab. In this moss-bespangled place
Let us rest a moment's space.

All. Let us rest!

Mab. For the sun, descending slow,
Now in calm and crimson glow
Brightens o'er the boundless west;
And closing eyes of weary devils
Wakes us unto moonlight revels.

All. Moonlight revels, revels!

Echo. Revels!

Mab. But ere we begin the sport
Must we call our elfin court;
For the world would finely go
Did we e'er forget to deal
Fairy justice on the slow
Sense of mortals, and by playing
Pranks upon them make them feel
That the world is past their weighing:
That the meadow's not all mowing,
Nor the harvest as the hoeing;
That the sheep is more than shearing,
And the salmon than the spearing;
That the beast's not made for basting,
Nor the tongue for nought but tasting;
That the hive's not only honey,
Nor the only magic money;
That man's trade means not mistrusting;
That fair love lies not in lusting;
And, though grievous 'tis agreeing,
Sometimes truth transcendeth seeing;
That there's something in the air
Subtler than they e'er suspect,
Which, e'en where they were aware,
Were too dainty to detect.

Business first, then, and thereafter
Jolly leisure and loud laughter.

All. And loud laughter, laughter!

Echo. After!

Mab. Hail, then! from your airy nooks
Underneath this leafy dome,
Elfin fairies, lightly come.
Leave your laughter-loving looks
For a moment, and endue
Graver bearing, as it brooks
Loyal-earnest fays to do.
Come! from overhead and under-
Foot, come swiftly footing it:
From the caverns of the thunder,
And the lean ant-lion's pit:
Come from where ye lazily
With grotesque grimacery
Swing in angles of the beech-boughs,
Or, like rare and dainty lord
Lady-friended on the sward,
Each politely unto each bows.
Come from every chink and cranny
Of grey bark and mossy cover,
Where ye teaze the long uncanny

Centipedes, and o'er them hover,
Filling them with dreadful anguish,
And foreboding of a beak !
Or from where ye lie and languish
Love beneath a leafy tent
Of white cyclamen, and seek
To commingle in mute glances
Fairy founts of wonderment.
Or with little limber lances,
Each the bristle of a boar,
And shrill horns of trumpet-moss,
Through the ancient woodlands hoar
Hunt the terrible and cross-
Grained stag-beetle till he roar
'Mercy,' for his antlers bright
Trophies are of valiant fight.
Come, then, over fern and bracken,
With swift pace: slow not nor slacken:
Down the sunbeam's line of splendour
Let your airy figures slender
Quickly slide. Let gentle Zephyr
Bear you as the winged heifer
Bore Europa. . . .

Zephyr (*hiding himself*). Never! never!

Mab. Come, our court waits ; half a minute,
Sees our subjects subject in it.

(*Elves come trooping in from all sides, and form a fairy ring round their queen.*)

Mab (*seating herself*).
This toadstool shall the seat of justice be ;
And, first, if any of our subjects see
Cause of complaint against another . . . .

Candy. Hear, Lady Queen, my huge half-brother,
Master Puck, 's been plaguing me,
And in the most outrageous fashion.

Puck. Ho! little Candy's in a passion.

Mab. Now, Puck, what's this, unruly man?

Puck. Let him unfold it ; he began.

Candy. O mischief! Hear me, Lady Queen.
It was two minutes since, I think,
That I was wandering on the green,
When there a pretty maiden-pink
I did espy,
And clambering up right joyfully,
Upon its flat and level disk,
As fairies wont, began to frisk
And frolic ; for, as mortals say,

The white dots on that dainty sweet
Carpet are prints of elfin feet.
Then Master Puck, passing that way,
Espied me, and—for, as you know,
Just in the midst of every flower
Of maiden-pink, where'er it blow,
There is a dark and narrow bower
Too deep for any sprite to view . . . .

Puck. At least for one so small as you !

Candy. He, Master Puck—of whom I talk—
Espying, shook the slender stalk,
That, in my horror and great fear,
My knees to tremble did begin . . . .

A voice. And in he slipped !

All. He sliddered in !

Echo. In !

(*General laughter and merriment.*)

Mab. Silence, I pray. Proceed, small elf.

Candy. There's not much further to relate.
The pretty flower beneath my weight
Bent, and I boded in despair
That on my head I must be hurled ;
But, sticking fast, in sheer mid-air,
Quite upside-down I saw the world.

All. O ecstatic fancy!

Echo. Fancy!

Mab. Peace, profitless imps. This tale of his
Requires some proof. Call witnesses.

(*Witness appears.*)

What is your name?—We know it well,
But for our courtly forms' sake tell
It us once more.

Thistledown. 'Tis Thistledown.

Mab. What saw you, Master Thistledown?

This. Now by the silver moon I swear,
That soon shall cleave the midnight air,
I saw a quaint and quirky scene.
As I was gliding o'er the green,
Driving in front a filmy sphere
Of that white down whose name I bear,
Lo! right afront, a flush of red
Upon the moss, and overhead
A cry of one in anguish pent.
Uplooking, in astonishment
I saw the sky one vast pink curtain,
And in the midst of it a certain
Not wholly unfamiliar feature,

Scarlet, the boss of that huge shield—
Tête sanguine on a purpure field.
'Twas Candy, said I, I'm your creature,
Slave, servant, minister, and man;
So helped him down, and hither ran.

Mab. Puck, to this story what say you?

Puck. In substance, I confess, 'tis true.

Mab (*solemnly*). Roundfaced scoundrel, with the sly
Smile and dark familiar eye,
Though I know thou'rt not in earnest,
Since all things to fun thou turnest,
Yet I warn thee such rude play
Ill besuits a loyal fay;
Therefore, lest condign displeasure
Visit thee with loss of leisure,
Leave these wayward habits scrapish,
End these wanton antics apish.

Echo. Pish!

Mab. What more awaits our royal grant?
In all the worlds that fairies haunt,
Not only on high moor or fen,
But in the stuffy brains of men,
Has aught been done amiss this day?
Has any housewife hoped to stay

Chimney soot from tumbling in
By counsel ta'en of kith or kin?
Has any farmer heaped his pride
On princely beast that has not died?
Has speculator made a hit,
Sleek-crediting his own sole wit?
Has any villain gone his way
Rejoicing that the night was dark,
And not learned ere the early lark
How much apiece stout handcuffs weigh?
Has any thought he understood
The world, and could do what he would,
And not been so fashed ere the morn
He wished himself had ne'er been born?
If any such mishap there be
Let it be signified to me.

(*Enter* 1*st* WISH.)

Who is this pallid eager elf?

1 *Wish.* My name, great lady, is Love of Pelf.
I come of that exhaustless race
That in men's brains doth breed apace
More million-fold than ocean's fishes—
The countless tribe of mortal wishes.

Mab. I know you well; what is your plaint?

1 *Wish.* Ah, sovereign queen, from this restraint
Release me ; for now ten long years
I suffer hateful prisonment
Within a miser's skull, fast pent
From all my fellow hopes and fears
In lonely greed of gain. Day-long
I chafe : no other fancies throng
That dismal vacant tenement,
But what from sheer ennui I paint
Upon its white unfurnished walls ;
And brief the respite that befalls
When sleep nods from my master's nape
The signal of my glad escape.

Mab. We know your tribe : 'tis yours to sting
Man from his brutish indolence
By fancied pleasures of the sense.
You teeming airy sprites, that wing
Your way about his dwelling house,
By cunning quaint devices rouse
Him ever from his former self,
And forward on the fancied pelf
With eager blind desire he rushes,
And finds it clay within his clutches.
So slowly learns the boorish clown,

By pointed sharp experience shown,
What is and is not; and may die
As wise, that is to say, well nigh,
As we are born. And each fond sprite
That's hatched as Wish in any wight
May never end his long career,
But like the bee that, flitting here
And there, makes trial of each flower,
Must flit from man to man till all
Have felt the magic of his power,
And yet have freed them from his thrall;
Then, having circled mortal toil,
He leaves the hated earthly coil
And enters into regions airy,
Becoming one of us—a fairy.
Say, elfin, has this miser then
Never yet come to wiser ken.

1 *Wish.* He scrapes, scrapes, as the sinner sinned,
Aimlessly, endlessly, without tire.
I showed him wealth of either Ind,
He opened wider-mouthed desire.
I am his thrice ill-fated slave—
Since he is mine—and till the grave
Holds him there is no hope for me.

Mab. This case is past recovery.
I'll give you quittance, go and find
New lodging in another mind.

1 *Wish.* The wretch will die without my help,
Like motherless unweaned whelp.

Mab. Nought can make such an one live, so
'Tis fair farewell to let him go.

(*Enter 2nd* WISH.)

Here comes a brother of your race.

2 *Wish.* True, but the kinship's hard to trace.
I am an essence light as air,
Impalpable, men call me Prayer:
I dwell among them when the morn
Falls on each waking face forlorn,
At even, when the breeze is heard
In lofty trees, their hearts are stirred
By me to high imaginings
Of beautiful and holy things,
Which hold them as men in a dream,
Who, walking, to themselves scarce seem
To touch the ground whereon they tread.
That spirit whereto mine is wed
Is of a peaceful lonely nun.

Her hands are helpful on the ways,
Her heart, worldweary, ever prays
To pass and be a little one,
A star not far from God's high throne.
Grant, gracious lady, this may be.

Mab. Such power I have not, yet I see
The end is not far distant. Stay
And watch with her another day.
Thy work builds up the world and gives
Substance and strength to mortal lives.
Who comes there now? Another one?

3 *Wish.* I crave for justice to be done.

Mab. What is your story.

3 *Wish.* I'll relate.
'Tis of a simple maid, sedate,
From homely duties of the farm
And household round of quiet charm
Rudely decoyed, and sad her fate.
For often when the days were warm
He came, her lover, and at eve,
When quiet sheep their slumbers leave
And once again begin to browse,
Would find her at the milking pail
Among her dun and dappled cows;

And there upon the fragrant gale
Would breathe forth honey-sweetened vows.
And she was coy, yet simple too,
And loved him with a love so true
She could not love him falsely. So
No sooner saw he this intent
Than he deserted her to go
In search of other merriment;
And she, poor wight, left broken-hearted,
From all her happy life is parted;
Yet true in her true heart remains,
And when I whisper through her pains,
Revenge! bids me behind her back.

All. Ah! might we stretch him on the rack!

Mab. She who is wronged forgives, but we
Who are not wronged cannot forgive:
Such faithlessness while fairies live
Un-fairy-punished shall not be.
Whither away the wretch went he?

3 *Wish.* Not far from here I saw him pass,
And fall asleep amid the grass.

All. Asleep amid the grass!

Echo. The ass!

Mab (*angrily*). What mocking Echo thus discerns

Sport in our solemn tones, and turns
Our every word to ridicule?
Have riddance of the brain-sick fool!
You, Puck, to gild your late disgrace,
Hie after her in earnest chase,
And bring her breathless to this place
To sit on penitential stool.

(*Exit* PUCK, *and re-enter after an interval, breathless, with a fair white nymph his prisoner.*)

Mab. Your punishment is quickly spoke (*to* ECHO).
(*To all.*)

Within the hollow of an oak,
With age and winter gnarled and wizened,
This mocking maid shall be imprisoned.
Go, some of you, and with a chaunt
Disturb the white owl from his haunt;
Rake out the dead leaves of last year,
And line the den with lichens sere,
Then quickly put her in and close
The entrance with a wall of moss,
And braid it carefully across
With tough woodbine and briar rose.
There shall she stay befitting time,
Forgetful of her wanton chime.

(*Exeunt* PUCK *and others with reluctant* ECHO.

Now to behold this base-born wight,
Where is he? Hist! and bring a light.
A glowworm in a lucid bell
Of white bindweed will serve us well.
Hang it upon a hair, and swing
It as the priests the censer fling.

(*They come upon a body in the grass.*)

Lo!

All. Oh, Oh!

Mab. Hush! lest he hear. He moves. Away!

All. Away!

(*They vanish on the nightwind down a beechen alley.* PETER *sits up, rubs his eyes, and presently falls asleep again.*)

SCENE II. *The same. Midnight.*

(*The rising moon is seen through the trees.*)

QUEEN MAB, *followed by the other Fairies, one after one, alights out of the night.*

Hist! fairies all, the silver queen
Of our devotion now is seen
With tender glances on the green
  Of maiden majesty.
Befits us then in choral ring
All wayward thoughts away to fling,
And loudly musically sing
  Our heartfelt fealty.

Chorus. Now when all the world's asleep,
  Hear our song.
Lady of the lonely steep,
Hear us where to thee we keep,
  In a throng,
Midnight morris on the lawn;

All the land
Whitens in thy silver dawn,
But the primal silence still
Dwells on meadow, tree, and hill,
Scarcely fanned
By the breeze, thy charioteer.
Soon thy slowly waning sphere,
Lifted far
O'er the topmost mountain-brows
And intricate forest-boughs,
Through the clear
Interspace of earth and star
Shall impel its shining car.

Then, ere many days are o'er,
In the light
Of thy fiery bridegroom bright,
Shalt accomplish strange love-lore:
There withdrawn from mortal sight
Shalt thou know
Inward changes, and explore
Caverns of thine ever-new
Birth anointed with the dew
Of the seasons as they go.

See, none is so noble-fair,
None is pure without compare,
Moving in the crystal air
With such grace,
As our lovely lady queen,
When her silver shield-like sheen
Breaks the bright star-arrows keen
From her face.

So our merry mazes we
Ravel on the sward;
Over us all silently,
Seen but never heard,
Bats about the treetops weave
Mysteries of flight,
Till the lingering summer eve
Flickers out of sight.
Then the secret planets seven
Join our mystic dance,
Peering from the height of heaven
Deep significance.

Chorus. Over the bracken and over the briar,
Tremulous green and tall grass-spire,
Falling in flashes of silvery fire

Breaks thy beautiful light.
Into the heart of the harebell it looks,
Touches the lips of lisping brooks,
Dreams in the eyes of wondering rooks
Watching their nest all night.

Broad like a flood it covers the ground,
Wraps the huge oak-buttresses round,
Wave-like washes a verdurous mound
Out on the open plain.
But where the forest is folded in shade
Darkling it glides through the listening glade,
Silent, footless, fair as a maid
Of love-fancying fain.

Hither away, away we hie,
Whithersoever thy light feet fly,
Whither thy glances lifted high
Lead our wandering quire.
Ringlets over the herbage fine,
Ringlets beside the tumbling brine,
Dance we ever to thee, divine
Queen of our heart's desire.

Hie and away to fairy sport,
Every ray in shady resort
Seemeth a maid of our lady's court,
Fair as the river's flow.
Far as the moonbeams reach we run,
Up to the edge of the rising sun ;
When a maiden is wooed she's won,
None can answer no.

Echo. No !

(*General laughter.*)

Mab. Once more this vagrant Echo mocks
Our voice, and shakes her laughter-locks
Contemptuous of the prison door ;
Haste, Puck, and hale her here once more.

(*Exit* PUCK. *After an interval re-enters with* ECHO.)

Puck. I found her mossy prison thrown
Upon the sward, and Echo flown.
Thrice loudly on her did I call,
And heard her by a ruined wall
Make faint reply ; but when I came,
Our Lady Moon, in argent flame,
Passed by that way with all her suite ;
I saw the fanciful white feet

Of all the maids that hold her train,
And lost my nymph. Like jewelled rain
A cloud of fireflies onward swept:
Upon the back of one I leapt
And bent its dance towards a dell
Among the woods which I know well;—
There in a huge and hollow stone
She oft will dwell whole days alone;—
And hardly had I found a place
Wherein to hide a moment's space,
When in, without doubt or demur,
She stept, and was my prisoner.

Mab. My elves, what punishment condign
Shall we inflict?—a fairy fine
Of all her changeling properties,
Her mask and tricksy mimicries,
Her sandals swift and magic hood
Invisible? Think ye this would
Be too severe upon the sprite?

Puck. Forget we not that other wight—
That mortal who of love makes sport,
And waits the sentence of our court.

Mab. 'Tis well. The maiden shall not lose
Her properties, provide she use

Them in our service for the just
Chastisement of that faithless dust.
He, jilting a true mortal maid,
Shall love a fickle mocking shade;
And jeering at heart-broken bliss
Shall break the little heart that's his.

(*They move to the side of the sleeping man.*)

Here, where he slumbers in the grass,
Beside his feet let stand the lass.
See how the dew has drenched his hair:
Doubtless his dreams are strange and rare.
See, on his forehead stand bright beads:
Doubtless the moon a fever breeds
Among his limbs. Soon will he wake:
Over his eyes love-cobwebs shake.
Stand all around, light elfin crew,
With censer lamps in order due,
And after me this song ensue,
Love-mystery to make.

Mab and Chorus.

O let the Moon, that with thy dreams
Mixes the magic of her beams,
Brood o'er thy slow wit till it teems
With multiform desire;

Let her thy dull soul so confuse
That thou have no more sense to use,
Nor subtlety enough to choose,
Nor wisdom to enquire.

Let her take form before thy face,
Descending with an airy grace
To fill this shining maiden's place,
Out of her sphere above ;
That when thou open sleepy eyes,
With half surprise, half not surprise,
In Echo's face thy heart surmise
The mistress of its love.

As in the days when Daphne stood
Before the Sungod's burning mood,
And passed and vanished, while he wooed,
Into a shady grove :
The moon shall pass her western bar,
The stars shall vanish star by star,
And changeling Echo fly afar,
And leave thee sick of love.

Mab. Haste now, the wight begins to wake ;
Already doth the dim dawn break,

With fitful breathings of the breeze;
A glimmer strikes about the trees,
The beechen boles grow large and white;
Haste, while the morning yet is night;
Our work, all we can do, is done;
Haste, ere the rising of the sun;
Haste, ere the morning is full day;
Haste, fairies all, away, away!

(*They vanish.*)

Peter (*sitting up and stretching himself.*)

O ay! 'tis cold. I dreamt.

(*Sees* ECHO.) But Gods above!

What's this? No dream: the dreamlass of my love!

(*To* ECHO.)

Look not so cold; see, I am wholly thine.
Look not so cold; I am not drunk with wine,
But love, true love. O how thou art so fair
As never mortal maid! The silver moon
Amid my dreams put off her starry shoon
To dwell amid thy hair, an aureole
Of unimagined brightness—like a bowl
Of sparkling wine when summer dries the soul.
O maiden, now the moonlight pales away
Thou art alone in beauty. Grant me, say,

Say thou wilt grant me but the single bliss
Of one complete explorative close kiss.
Yet 'twould not be enough, divinest elf,
But thou must render me thy whole sweet self.

(ECHO *moves backward.*

Nay! be not angry. Let me touch thy hand ——
How fickle is the light about the land.
She seems to fade. This doubtful morning haze
And glimmering white dawn begins to daze
My proper sight.

But I will follow thee,
And in my love-devotion shalt thou see
My joy to brave all danger. Dearest one,
Let us halt here a space. How now? she's gone.
And now? why now? But reason this outreaches:
A crowd of maids !—or are they only beeches?
No, here thou art: all danger is surpast.
My love, my lily-fair, ah, now at last
What longing arms I fling around thy neck ——
(*Embraces a beechen stem.*) Oh!

Echo (*out of the distance*). Echo.

EARTH'S VOICES.

EARTH'S VOICES.

I.

The invocations and the cries of Earth.—
Once, high uplifted into lucid space
Beyond the vital air's inveiling girth,
Alone in night and the intense embrace
Of the star-circled sun, I turned my face,
And saw the fields and forests, islands, seas,
Of this fair planet moving from their place
Eastward for ever ; and I seemed to seize
The low rhythm of their movement like a murmuring
breeze.

II.

Half lay in shadow and the land of night ;
And as when o'er a sparkling ocean-plain
Wave follows wave in mounds of rolling light
To some dim shore where all their splendours wane,

So ruddy deserts and green lands of grain,
Blue seas and rocky headlands, rank by rank,
Passing in slow procession did attain
The shore of night, and on that cloudy bank
Out of all sight and sequence into darkness sank.

III.

But now the Moon, late hidden, as I moved
Peered over Earth's black shoulder, like a sprite
Half charmed by some huge monster half beloved,
Half feared because of his exceeding might.
And where, about the pole descending white,
Wide snow-fields lie, and like an ermine cape
Cover the rounded world, her glances bright
Glimmered in azure calm o'er half its shape ;
The rest the sovereign sun in cloth of gold did drape.

IV.

So beautiful the scene that with delight
Gazing I lost no detail of its graces,
Until—like one who, wakeful late at night
With meditating fond familiar faces,

Starts from the busy picture fancy traces,
Awe-struck with outer silence—wonderbound
I watched the worlds glide forward from their places
Into abysmal stillness : not a sound
Now marked their smooth resistless speed to the profound.

v.

Then in an universe of suns I saw
Our planet pass obscurely like a mote ;
And filled with sudden yearning and great awe,
To know the burden of its single note
Amid the spheric chant, with wings of thought
I cleft the airless space, dipt into shade
Nightward below the Moon, and, forward brought
In one large curve of meteor swiftness, made
Entrance into the sunlight on Earth's orient grade.

vi.

There paused a moment ; then with slow wide wing
Sank through the murmurous air. And as I beat
Earthward, a lark, like arrow from the string,
Shot by me with a shrill great cry to greet

The rising sun, and tossed his music sweet
Upward and outward in a fount for ever.
Screaming below a wounded eagle fleet
Went like a whirlwind over rock and river,
Seeking the high crag-homeland of his death's endeavour.

VII.

So, landward, I alighted on a beach
Beside a misty sunlit sea that swayed
And shimmered like a cloud of fireflies, each
Borne to and fro as random fancy bade;
When through the soft hush that the water made
I heard loud voices and rude choral song,
And saw a boat that with its anchor weighed
Pushed outward from the shore, and in a throng
The women stood, and seaward their white farewells flung.

VIII.

Until the daring music dipt and died
Over the flood, and all the air was still;
Then turning from the melancholy tide
The women mounted homeward up the hill;

And I remained. It seemed their sturdy will
Was to explore new lands ; instead whereof
I heard the whistling shrouds sing wildly shrill
Over a white sea domed with black above ;
The roaring winds about them whirled and snakelike
strove,

IX.

Stung by the lightning, and a maddened cry
Smote heavenward as the gaping beams drank death ;
And, like a hungry beast that cannot die,
Ocean flung high her white and windy breath,
Heaped huge her wet coils o'er the dead beneath,
And forward rolling in fresh quest of prey
Rustled each surfy scale and python wreath.
But turning from my dream I took the way
Of those sad wives, and sought the village o'er the bay.

X.

And one walked ever, vacant-eyed, apart,
And hastened ; whom I followed to a rude
Dim chamber where the one child of her heart,
Smitten with mortal pain—six years of feud

'Twixt life and death—moaned and in grievous mood
Denied endearance ; whom her mother kissed
And stroked her fair hair, but thus vainly sued
One smile of recognition, for I wist
She only cried as cries a lamb lost in the mist,

XI.

Whom the unknown One watches. So an hour
Her mother watched and lulled a low refrain
Which with her weariness did overpower
To placid sleep the fretful sense of pain ;
And evermore the song, renewed again
About that chamber, seemed obscurely fraught
With ancient memories of grief and vain
Renewals of despair, the slow years wrought
To patient love and tenderness which is not taught.

XII.

But now borne forward on the wind afar
I heard the roll of drums, and in the street,
Standing, beheld the burnished ranks of war
Pass by in dignity of measured beat.

Strange was the tramp of quick persistent feet
O'erharmonised by music, like the days
Of one who through a long life's frost and heat
Still labours on and, while he labours, prays,—
His faith high while his feet halt on the dusty ways.

XIII.

A thousand soldiers with eyes forward cast,
Yet flashing somewhat at the random shout
A stranger village sent them, so they passed :
Fair and sunfreckled, veteran and raw lout,
Each with his own cloudfancies clothed about—
To bring fame homeward like a friend, or die
Storming the stubborn-hearted steep redoubt.
And as they went their music rang on high
Afar through fields and vineyards to the summer sky.

XIV.

Empty the little street was, and quite still ;
Save, as I passed, the murmur of one blind
Gray beggar who upon a warm door-sill,
Deaf in his age and darkened in his mind,

Muttered the wind of words he could not find
Wherewith to implore the silence ; and his moan,
As I went forward, floating after, twined
About my heart, till, hamlet left, alone
I sat where grass was green upon a sunny stone.

XV.

Then I perceived that Nature has one cry
For all her children ; for around me shrill
Cicalæ, hid in flowering grasses high,
Made the whole land with their sharp music thrill ;
Which with the hot air over vale and hill
Went quivering heavenward, like a censer-fire
Of Nature's own strange yearning to fulfil
Some intimate foreknowledge and desire
Of unexpressed perfection, whereto all aspire.

XVI.

And overhead three swifts, keen-twittering,
Darted each after each and passed,
Cleaving the winds with scymitar-curved wing,
Skyward, in mad career of circles vast,

Until they vanished in the blue at last.
So I arose, and passing from that place
Fled o'er the fields and woodland valleys fast,
Until upon a plain I paused a space
Before a densely-peopled wideflung city's face.

XVII.

Like a great altar on a rising ground
It stood, surmounted by a smoky sign
High-pointing heavenward ; and I heard a sound,
Low, like the bateless roaring of the brine
Which on a thousand miles of Afric's line
Surges for ever : 'twas a nation's prayer,
Hoarse, unremitting, and the mist malign
Was laden with reiterate plaint of care,
Triumph and strife and wide-eye'd want and wan despair.

XVIII.

And past me, with a shriek from East and West,
And feet of thunder up the sloping ways,
The great town drew in fiery grim unrest
Her steaming traffic through its iron maze ;

And all the roads a flickering dust did raise,
Like white flames o'er the country far and wide,
Because of those who in the wheeling chaise
Or huge deliberate wain on every side
About her to and fro their busy errands plied.

XIX.

So, standing by the gate, I was aware
Of low soft singing and a voice whose tone
Struck strangely through the resonant harsh air ;
And at a window spied a maid, alone,
Oblivious of hard ways and walls of stone,
Who, all the while with needle deft in hand,
Sang, and it was as Love a veil had thrown
About her singing and herself, to stand
Between her cloud-world and the loud ungracious land.

XX.

For in the heaven of her voice I saw
The fair fields where love-dreaming feet delay
Beside a brook whose budding beeches straw
Dead leaves of last year in the new-mown hay ;

Where 'twixt the closely-grown stems two can stay
And see but one scene all an afternoon,
Save in each other's eyes, where Love's bright ray
Burns diverse beauty, like the sun and moon,
Silver and golden, through warm nights and days of June.

XXI.

So fair a Paradise of longing dwelt
Between her lips. But as I dreamt thereof
There came a hush, and some around me knelt.
I turned ; and saw the sad reverse of Love :
A slow funereal train that seemed to move
Upon the music of its own low plaint,
In silence of all hearts, while two did prove
Death's extreme severance, and one with faint
World-desolate cry broke the pauses of the chant.

XXII.

Which passed. And, like a loud returning tide,
The roaring world swept upward to the gate,
Bearing me inward ; and straightway the wide
Street-wilderness unwound its noisy state.

I heard the eager strife and fierce debate
Of wayside traffic and the hurried tramp
Of countless feet upon the pavement-slate,
Like rain that nightly falls upon a damp
Garden, whose steadfast plash the ear with awe doth stamp.

XXIII.

And din of hawkers and in dusk by-lanes
Discordance of hoarse tuneless instruments,
Rhythmical ring of anvils, hiss of planes,
And busy hum of factories immense ;
And one, a mother with pale features tense,
Who, peering in each swift indifferent face,
Pleaded her child's life, till her own starved sense
Turned giddy in the shifting whirling race,
And she fled from men's scorn to Death's obscure embrace.

XXIV.

And one, a man, in crying of his wares
Grown aged, till forgetful even of gain,
Feeble in body, bent, and gray in hairs,
Nought of him but a voice seemed to remain ;

For with a long high note, like one in pain,
Rising and falling with pathetic art,
Prone through the streets he went and wheeled his wain,
Nor looked to right or left to find a mart,
But only forward to fulfil his one dim part.

XXV.

Then, turning from the crowd, I saw the men
Who sharpen rude steel to each shapely end
Ranged rank on rank within a long low den,
Each doomed from high seat o'er a wheel to bend,
As though a nation's tyranny did lend
The load of all its wealth to every shoulder;
And with the murmur of the stones did blend
A hectic cough, fitful, of lives that moulder
Motionless under heaven, each like a grey rock-boulder

XXVI.

And farther onward, in a lurid glare,
I saw the red heat-wrinkled limbs of those
Who ply their fierce glass furnaces with air,
And, day and night renewed, without repose

Blow till the tube's white-dazzling pendant glows
To clear and perfect grace—a subtle feat;
And evermore the blast with fitful throes
Of molten fury from that inward heat
Roared upward in the silence of their naked feet.

XXVII.

So through the ranks I passed of those who do
Good service in the masonry of man,
Whose measurements are sure and blows are true,
And hearts courageous for whate'er they can
In field, or factory, or camp, who scan,
Most critical, their own work; and I heard
Their labour's musical low murmur span
The spaces of a land's despair—a word
Whispered in Heaven's ear: and my heart with joy was stirred.

XXVIII.

Whereafter, in a while, I saw a crowd
Stream to a gate as of some sacred fane,
And passing inward was aware of loud
Sweet harmonies in rhythmical refrain,

And heard the ringing strings recite again
Those heights and depths of yearning human mood,
Eternal orisons, which one in pain
Daylong and nightlong of dread solitude
Wrought for the want and wonder of Earth's multitude.

XXIX.

Yea, when a string smote softly through the still,
Giving a note of sorrow to all times,
Whereto with gradual melodious thrill
One after one responded, like faint chimes
Heard in the leafen gloom of sunny climes:
All hearts with awe were silent; but thereon,
As when a wind breaks forward through the limes,
Sweeping the bees out, with an angry tone
A myriad tumultuous voices drowned the one;

XXX.

And raved in harsh reiterated rage
And insane self-insistence, till a chill
Shudder the listening spirit did engage,
As when one brooding all night o'er some ill

Wakes to the hard blind roaring of Life's mill.
So note on note the intertangled sound
Grew in chaotic utterance until,
With whirlwind cries of fear, as though the ground
Of all existence opened, from the world-profound

XXXI.

Three tones strode upward through the noisy throng.
Great was the hush: as when a rabble crew,
Bent on destruction, wanton spite and wrong,
Sees one it fears but knows not in full view.
Great was the wonder of that hush, wherethrough
I heard the plaintive voice that spake before,
Cry as for help; and though the murmur grew
Instant again, I knew there was a power
Prompt to devise deliverance ere the final hour.

XXXII.

Thus wave on wave the wind of music swept
About our hearts, till all old memories
Of joy and sorrow from their slumbers leapt
Transfigured to life-radiance in surprise

At their own beauty ; and the seas and skies
Poured all their splendour o'er us, and fair dreams
And high forebodings in those symphonies
Glanced on us, fitful with reflected gleams
Shot from the silver waters as of unseen streams.

XXXIII.

So when I turned again into the street,
Even Life's common sounds seemed glorified
In Music's sunlike utterance : the fleet
Insistent days and hours seemed to divide
With measured equal beats the rhythmic stride
Of ages, in whose loud discordance stood,
Not old despair of hopes so long belied,
But promise of harmonious ends of good
And present part in splendour not yet understood.

XXXIV.

Thus pensive through the city's western gate
Half unaware I wandered, and a slight
Slope led me from that tumult. 'Twas now late :
The level sun made shadow more than light,

And beat the mountains with his burning might
To ruddy gold. Calm was the fragrant wind
Of garden closes. One, a peasant wight,
Sang as the day went downward unrepined ;
But soon I left that land and all its lays behind ;

XXXV.

And fled up on the mountains, crag by crag,
Until I gained their pathless utmost peak,
Where, resting on an extreme stony jag,
I turned, and saw that City's towers antique
And modern chimneys, as by sudden freak,
Flushed scarlet in the sun's descending fire ;
And straight a hundred belfry throats did speak
A deep-toned Ave, mounting higher and higher
Heavenward about the world as daylight did expire.

XXXVI.

And as when on a purple Alpine ridge
With silver-sweet farewell the evening star
Delays an instant, until Earth's black edge,
Deemed motionless of mortals, from afar

Plunges obscurely forward to debar
All further greeting : so on that grey crag
Close under heaven I felt Earth, like a car,
Wheel from beneath me, and my flight did lag
Westward from that high mountain like a wind-borne flag.

XXXVII.

And I beheld, once more, Night's cloudy rim
Creep forward over continents and seas,
And heard the bells of eve, where'er the dim
Shadow delayed, break upward on the breeze
With childlike cries for help to One who sees
From them that fear the darkness ; by whose shore
I saw a vision of those who on their knees
Morning and eve the face of heaven explore,
Circling the world with prayer and praise for evermore.

XXXVIII.

Loudly the bells rang ; but ere long each tone
Lapsed in the general consent of sound,
As upward and in airy flight alone
I left the haunts of mortals, and the round

Of Earth gave but one cry to the profound—
Voices and bells with notes of labour blent,
One indistinct hoarse murmur, inly wound
About the world, and rising, as intent
To reach the throne of God before its force was spent.

XXXIX.

An instant so. And then the veil of air
Dropped, and I passed into the absolute
Far silence of the spheres. No sound was there,
But all the throbbing hours fell round me mute,
Like wavelets where no shore is ; past compute
The myriad worlds, in mystic motion free,
Fled round about or fell like ripened fruit
All down Night's infinite ; and like a sea
The universe set shoreward to eternity.

XL.

So I beheld Earth, with her weary load
Of want, pass swiftly ; and it was as when
Some plaintive strain of music on a road
Grows distant-faint and flutters out of ken

Behind an angle : like the minds of men,
At once their world and prison, that white vail
Of soft circumfluent air did surely pen
Each heavenward cry and high despairing wail
Wall-like within its own impassable fixed pale.

XLI.

And swifter, like a wan and eager wight
Threading some gay-apparelled crowd, she fled
Among the universal spheres of night
Following her lord the sun where'er he led,
Until she passed and vanished as one dead ;
While he supreme in thunder-stillness strode
Forward with lessening flame into the dread
Distance of gloom where all his glory showed
Less than the starry lamps which light grey Time's abode.

XLII.

Yet in that moment saw I that his feet
Were shod with purpose ; for in some huge arc
He swept sublime, whose centre equal-fleet,
Who knows? might flame-like cleave the wondering dark

About some greater light—again a spark
Before the greatest. So with high hand fraught
With quick farewells to Earth I turned to mark
The end of all our wanderings, and sought
Him who holds all world-systems centred in his Thought.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

WHO COMES WITH ME?

(SUGGESTED BY SCHUMANN'S 'ARABESKE.')

WHO comes with me, who comes with me,
Through the morning air so bright and free?
Come hand in hand, by sea and land,
All day together will we be.

Come o'er the hills, where sunlight fills
The twinkling grass with new delight;
Breathe from the air enchantment fair
And happiness from every sight.

See, pure and pale, athwart the gale
Gay streamers of the wild red rose;
While, far behind, with white foam lined,
The broad green sea careering flows;

And all around, to the utmost bound,
Cliff caught on cliff, and range on range;
Earth's garment bright, spread out in light,
And figured o'er with endless change

Beneath the crowds of white-rimmed clouds
That sail together within the blue,
And bar green lands with purple bands
Which fading fringe the distant view.

And far across the yellow gorse
And blooming heather embossed in green
Sky and sea have kissed in luminous mist—
A glorious veil of silver sheen.

The bee on her way takes holiday,
Flitting at will from flower to flower;
The spider spreads his amber threads,
All careless of to-morrow's shower.

The harebell laughs as the clover quaffs
His delicate draught of morning dew;
Each bird upsprings and joyously sings,
And all are singing to me and you.

O come with me, O come with me,
All day together by land and sea ;
What matters to know of whither we go,
If only together we two be ?

IN A CANOE.

From shade to light, from light to shade,
The overbending boughs between,
I glide, as in a fairy glade,
Till the sweet summer day is made
A melody of summer green.
The meadows all are clothed with light,
As with a garment, and the heat
Swims dreamful where the grass is dight
With ox-eye daisies and the white
Of lady's-smock and meadow-sweet.
And clear-cut in the quiet air
Move large brown outlines of the cows,
That nose Earth's verdure fresh and fair
And scatter far its perfume where

With peaceful onward push they browse.
Beside the brink the swift stream lags,
And spreads its liquid arms to cool
The golden-flowered phalanx of flags
Whereby the water-wagtail wags
Its mirrored head in many a pool.
And here a swallow lightly skims
Or strikes the broad flood, breast to breast,
And there in shady hollow swims
The lazy roach beneath wet rims
Of water-lilies, where they rest.
Here by an overhanging bank
The sunlit soft transparent wave
Reveals a myriad lives that prank
In giddy dance within the dank
Deep water-world which is their grave ;
And there a wild rose overblown
Showers red rain on the shining way,
And the fair moving fields are sown
With countless blossoms random-thrown
And gliding downwards with the day ;
And here and there a willow dips
And dallies with the dimpling plain,
But evermore the river slips

Onward—as from a maiden's lips
Some low melodious refrain.
And with a soft and rippling sound
The little bark fleets onward too,
By bushy brake and meadow-bound,
The swimming swirling curves around,
Till in a slumbrous swoon the view
Slides swiftly shifting, and the shades
Grow longer, and the evening light
Dies, and the sunset splendour fades
Slowly against the stars of night.

THE ARTIST TO HIS LADY.

I put my hands together, palm to palm,
And say : Take these ; and, whereso'er thou wilt,
Go,—I will follow. For indeed I have
No other life than this—to follow Thee.

THE lady of my love is very fair ;
Often when morning rose above the rain
She waved her white hand at the window-pane,
And passed and mounted through the fields of air.

I never saw her face or felt her smile,
She seemed to pine among the haunts of men ;
Till at the last I left my city den,
And followed in her footsteps for a while.

She led me where the light shines freely down,
She set me by the river-fringes green,
And turned herself, and in her face, I ween,
The glories of all worlds to me were shown.

Her marble front is not of mortal mould,
Her look is of the lands which are not seen,
Broad is her brow, somewhat austere her mien,
Yet magical her beauty to behold.

For all the friendless way hedged with offence,
For all the hours forsaken of her face,
Now to behold in peace her peerless grace
Is and remains my perfect recompense.

VENUS APHRODITE.

I.

ONCE when, as ever since the world began,
Dawn touched the silver level of the sea,
And like a golden shield of growing span
Crept on the land of twilight stealthily ;
The Sun, yet sunk below his eastern lea,
Whence all the heavenly limits he could mark,
As Perseus through Medusa's locks, in glee
Shot all his shining fingers through the Dark,
And once more laid the monster motionless and stark.

II.

In that day for the inhabitants of Earth
And Heaven, moving in darkness heretofore,
A vision of high beauty came to birth
Amid the foam of Ocean's eastern shore :

Such as the Gods, who tread their golden floor,
And mortals, dwellers in the orange grove
Domed with aerial blue, in all their lore
Feigned not in earth below or sky above,
Yet, seeing, made the queen and regent of their love.

III.

For while the waves danced onward o'er the deep,
As at the first day bright and bluely clear,
And morning mounting up the saffron steep
In opaline pure splendour did appear
Pavilioning with flame the ocean-sphere;
A mist shot upward from the shining main,
A deep blush brightened through it, like a tear
That trembles on a rosebud after rain
And glows with heightened hue on what it cannot stain.

IV.

One cloud-like moment in the air it hung;
And then the Sun, in eastern state confest,
Great level arms along the ocean flung,
Giving to each swart wave a golden crest,

And let one finger on the foambell rest,
Which, like a hollow fretted crystalline
Of some rich secret rudely dispossessed,
Sundered and parted in the bright sunshine,
Showing the Foamborn in her beauty made divine.

v.

A sunbow bent above her for a sign,
The spray embowered her in brilliant rain,
Her rosy feet upon the hyaline
Danced lightly like rose-petals o'er a plain ;
Heaven was her canopy, a lofty fane
For incense and for music and high mirth,
Her laughing eyes, turned sunward, did detain
As in a mirror, all the smiles of Earth
Made happier because of beauty's perfect birth.

vi.

With one hand half uplifted did she hold
Her fair locks from her in a shining band,
As if to match the sunlight with their gold
Glittering with ocean-dew ; the other hand

Sustained a robe sea-woven of glaucous strand,
Which veiled her limbs as softly as the moon
Glimmers where dawn-illumined mountains stand
Rosy in snow, or as in leafy June
The glowing foliage holds yet hides the hot midnoon.

VII.

And where she stood the waves on every side
Fell from her into many a hollow space
And fair concavity, as though they tried
To keep the impress of her rounded grace
In inverse beauty ; like a crystal case,
Broken to free some glory of art, they lay,
But shifting ever as to catch a trace
Of that fair model, till in fair dismay
They spread and died upon the distance far away.

VIII.

For with divine consent from arm to arm,
From breast to brow, the lines of beauty run
And shift and flow with ever-changing charm
Which nothing can detain beneath the sun ;

And like a silver fount that seems to shun
Even momentary rest, but ever flows
In wasteful beauty till the day is done,
Lovely in loss, since loveless in repose,
So rich in love's regret fair Aphrodite rose.

IX.

And Neptune's children from the emerald gloom
Of ocean caverns, in a boisterous pack
Played round about her path of roseate bloom—
Sea-nymph and Triton in a foamy track,
With winds and water-sprites and cloudy rack
Of morning, and the mountains seen afar—
Orbed in one onward course which grew not slack
Till Venus, mounting on her dove-drawn car,
Went heavenward through the blue vault like a glistening star.

X.

Therefore when Gorgon-headed Night was gone—
In labyrinthine marble calm and dread
Unearthly glitter, death to look upon—
Beauty arose to birth, and so was wed

To every dawn-lit dell and mountain-head
And dream of man ; wherewith in flowing guise
Unto the heavenly lands she lightly sped,
To be Earth's lovely envoy in the skies
And chosen Cynosure of Gods' and mortals' eyes.

SLEEPING VENUS.

Still, as she sleeps, betwixt her slender brows
The calm of summer and dim twilight dwells ;
Day's faint vermilion, clear with evening bells,
Fitfully on her sleep-flushed temple glows.

Her lips, like rosy lovers loth to part,
Make scanty room between them for her breath ;
About their wavy outline wandereth
A smile as sweet as when swift sunbeams dart

This way and that upon a windless lake
That ripples roundly ere it sinks to rest ;
And to that smile the smooth curves of her breast
And flowing limbs delightful answer make.

O'er all that placid world of hill and dale
  Night from her downcurved eyelids slowly draws
  The fragrant gloom of sleep, that overawes
And folds the waking senses in a veil.

White shines her forehead as when moonbeams rise
  Blue-veined against heaven's crystal vault profound;
  Her ebon hair, in slumbrous tresses bound,
Forebodes the silence of the starry skies.

A SUMMER DAY.

Love from the mountains led his sheep,
Once, on a summer day,
Into a valley green and deep,
Under rock-ramparts gray;

Sat on a stone where the waters run
Rippling the hours away,
Touched his lute in the light of the sun,—
That was a summer day;

Prayed in his heart for love which is fair,
Prayed as the lonely pray;
Love which is fire when life is air
Laden with fragrant May;

And as the leaflets lisped, and their shade
Shifted like emerald spray,
Paused and peered evermore as he prayed
Love might pass that way.

Then from the meads below the vale,
Love, with a high sweet song,
Came through the thickets, where roses trail
Elder-bushes among ;

Reeled as she went a homely thread
Spun from a distaff-prong,
Singing until her heart was wed
Unto her own clear song ;

Sang to the light and the sun-lit glen,
Prayed for love which is strong ;
Love which leads with a light look, when
Life cannot bind with a thong.

And as she wound by the hedgerows, where
Daisies and buttercups throng,
Listened and looked evermore, lest there
Love might reply to her song.

So the sheep, as the day grew red,
  Straggled and went astray;
Out of a listless hand the thread
  Leapt, and was lost on the way;

But ere Night o'er the mountains mute
  Wafted her wings along,
Love met love below, and the lute
  Tuned itself to the song.

THE PEAK OF TERROR.

UPWARD all day we toiled athwart the rain,
Henry and I, through Alpine pastures green
And great firwoods that overhung the vale
Far spread below ; but ever, as evening fell,
Day's cloudy curtain parted, and the mists
Thinned more and more, and fled among the hills,
Or dropped beneath, or clung in silver threads
To tresses of dim forest ; and we saw
A clear blue arch of space spanned high above,
And, burning behind the utmost mountain edge,
Gold altar-glories of the stricken sun.

And high amid the snows we found a crag,
Hung darkly on that argent slope, within
Stamped hollow as by rage of Titan foot ;

And there we lit the flame, and made ourselves
Good cheer, while round us dreamed a silent world.

But ere we slept, he, my beloved, arose
And lightly left our firelit cave and stood
Night-circled on a jutting rock beyond ;
And with the setting stars about his head
And at his feet that purple vale profound,
He sang the song he sings me evermore.
He sang to watchful heaven and weary earth,
To glittering peak and star and crescent moon,
And high Love, and the loveworn Heart of all.
And all the vales were filled with melody,
And o'er the wide wide night and clear profound,
And over the blank snows and barren crags,
His song came floating back unto his feet:
Unto his feet, and deep into my heart,
There as I lay by the fire and saw him stand,
Saw him there in the night, and see him now,
Now, and for ever.

For he came not back.
At morning dawn, when earth was dashed with light,
Beside the golden summit he slipped and fell,
And slid, and passed to his own home beyond.

THE VEILED ISIS, OR THE NATURE WORSHIPPER.

Ἐγὼ εἰμὶ πᾶν τὸ γεγονὸς καὶ ὂν καὶ ἐσόμενον καὶ τὸν ἐμὸν πέπλον οὐδείς πω θνητὸς ἀπεκάλυψε.

Now know I that the white-winged hours of heaven
'Twixt me and thee in endless retinue,
Each after each, shall pass ; nor ever pause
To lift the least light corner of thy veil,
Or grant thine eyes to mine. O hidden One,
Supreme-set Mother of all mystery,
And myriad-named of men, now know I well
Thou dost endure us but a moment's span
Upon thy heaving bosom, to behold

The wonder of thy movement, at thy grace
To fall and worship—ay, we know not what !
And then, or ever thou hast heard, to fall
And pass, remembering ourselves and thee
No more. O strange, O unassailable,
Thou that with myriad bright play of eyes
Provokest our desire, thy seamless robe,
Set close about for our bewilderment,
Folds thee in perfect proof. For I have toiled
And tarried long by thy familiar ways,
Have known thee going out and coming in,
And watched thy daily wont ; have felt the flame
Flash from thy face almost to scathe mine eyes,
And heard at night thy breath about my ears
Beat, and pass quickly by ; yea, I have tracked
Thy fingers in and out through woven clouds,
And passionless ebb and flow of waves and streams,
And rockings of the air, only to know
The weft is woven without any flaw
From flight of stars to atoms : rent is none,
No gap, no visionary gleam, and Thou
Art hid for ever.

Therefore now, once more,
I see the Spring descend upon the Earth—

The new life quivering upwards into light;
I see the plaited green on plant and tree
Slide from the soil and break the knotted bark;
The grey elm quickens with a strange delight;
The golden chestnut-buds against the blue
Gleam like a thousand lamps; and melody
Thrills through the woodland air. O now once more
The primal splendour of the sun returns
With a most welcome triumph. Thorn and may
Stand white with bridal blossom unto him;
The ground is cloven, and the sleeping flowers
Have heard and known their lord: through wood and dell
Yellow primroses leap and peer to heaven—
He rideth by begirt with azure wings—
And bloom and beauty multitudinous
Break on his path. The violet stands by
Glad in her grassy covert. In the meads
Like angel hosts white daisies wave their wings,
And as he passes bend like one and rise,
And, while he fires with light the Western lands,
Close their bright eyes and blush for very joy.
Once more o'er vale and mountain do I hear
The voice of Spring's sweet trouble: nightingales

And thrushes in the thicket numberless
Tremble to utter on the quiet air
The mystery of eve ; where all night Earth,
Orbed in her dreams of star-related life,
Floats in a flood of moonlight and of dew.
Once more I see it all, and, seeing, know
The infinite of beauty—how thy world
Is charactered with wisdom : each winged sense
Faints with the weight of wonder, till I walk
Like one enchanted to a magic sound,
A king whose eyes are feasted with a play
Of endless scenic change, a child to whom
Earth has no bounds for joy.

And yet, ah ! yet,
Deeper than all, and deeper than my joy,
Thou whom I know, nor yet can ever see,
Thou, mother Isis, mother over all,
Thou radiant Life and one Reality,
Vanishest for ever : like the Northern beam
Decking the far-off mountains, all untouched,
Unheard, inviolable, Thou movest on
In the great silence of our hearts, through leaf
And bud and fairy bloom fleeting for aye
Wherever we are not. And though our spirits

Burst through their woven chambers till the heart
Ache for the stress of passion ; though our dreams
Be girt about with one dull cloud of death
For hope that cannot pierce ; yea, though our eyes
For gazing vainly on thy vanishings
Waste away in their orbits ; yet at last
We fall, our arms stretched outward on the earth
And features folded in the clay-cold ground,
Nor e'er behold thee face to face at all.

THE DAISY.

If the daisy shake her tresses
To the broad blue arch of sky,
As a child that dimly guesses
All the love in its mother's eye;

If she clasp each lily finger
At the falling of the night,
Lest the pure stars—an she linger—
Seem to shame her golden light;

If she dance with many a sister
In the hot shafts of the sun,
Swaying, swimming, in bright glister
Where a thousand are as one;

If she reach out arms to beckon
Diamond motes from dancing air :
What is that, that it should quicken
Pulses worn with toil and care?

If she wreathe the mountains round her,
Centred in the grassy earth,
Where the first sun-glances found her
Shaking dewy locks of mirth ;

If the waters flow beside her,
Catching something from her smile,
Whether storm or sun betide her,
Loving to be near, the while ;

What is that, that it should win us
To heart-yearnings still untold,
Year on year that grow within us,
Till the years themselves grow old?

THE TIDE.

Six hours it voiceless sank along the shore
In the soft cloud-girt eve ; turned in its bed,
And dreamed of other lands. But when the night
Grew to its stillest, and none knew thereof,
There crept across the world a wind-like sigh—
Sweet breath of waking lips—that rose, and passed,
And died along the night, and rose again
Ineffable. And Ocean knew once more
Her crescent tide-mark with its golden range
Of fretted sands and shell-impearlèd weeds,
And once more, joyous, filled with rolling waves
Her creeks and inland waterways ; then paused,
And, wondering at herself, sank back to rest,
And dreamed again the dream that has no end.

I. *THE SPIRIT OF THE MOUNTAIN TORRENT.*

I MOCK the moaning of the maddened sea
In fathomless gorges far withdrawn, and down
I drag the screaming crags resistlessly
From ledge to ledge through storm and rainbow crown.
I sing of vessels trapt in utter night,
That shiver down a roaring gulf of wind,
Before them sudden blackness, and behind
Waste hissing of the waves in foaming white.

I fold the feverish eyelids of the day
To court confusion of the crazy dark;
I shroud the sunbeam in my ceaseless spray
And drown the slender singing of the lark;

I race in the swift eagle's flight, and roll
The eager flashes of his yellow eye ;
I rage beside the hurricane, and sigh
'Mid seas of silent snow about the pole.

I dance along the ruins of the world
Wrapt in my own impenetrable breath ;
Stride I in fury on the storm-winds whirled
With war and famine, pestilence and death.
I sing along the desert in the sun,
I play amidst his rays and plume my wings ;
I thunder in the columned dust that flings
The veil of death, nor man nor beast can shun.

Hear me, O hear ! I cease not evermore :
Me the eternal Future changes not,
Ye bubbles broke upon a sounding shore,
Ye worms that creep into the earth and rot !
I only live : I dip and dart and skim,
And weave my flight through elemental spray ;
Who battles me, ruthless I sweep away,—
Who yields, oblivion swiftly merges him.

II. *THE SPIRIT OF MAN.*

Sing on, thou shape of death, thy savage song,
I will defy thee, though the foam-waves roll,
I, in the shivering night, so lone, so long,
Waiting for thee—a naked human soul :
I will defy thee ; though thy laws should give
Pause to my breath in act of utterance,
Though in each tortuous twist and trick of chance
My life be lapped, I will defy ; and live.

I am of thee, World-torrent ; and who braves
Thy strength shall share thy strength ; so sweep away
This body, still athwart thy raging waves
My hands outreaching round thy soul I lay ;

And hold thee fast for ever. As I cling
Painfully persevering, in my ears
The surging of the mighty water clears
To one sweet harmony ; and, like a wing

Pulsing in distant skies, is borne the sound
Of that far chaunt whose charm no mortal man,
Hearing, forgets for ever ; for around
The dreams of childhood when his life began,
His formless youthful fancies, and above
All after-cries and cravings still it rang
Imperiously insistent where it sang
The will of God, the wonder of His love.

SUMMER LIGHTNING.

Like a dawn the distant lightning,
Fitful, shadow-crowned,
O'er the twilit ocean brightening
Breaks without a sound.

Softly-fair the clouds are riven
Crimson faint with bliss,
As the heights and depths of heaven
Open to its kiss.

Calm in western lake-like splendour
Floats the star of eve ;
All hues opaline and tender
Round about it weave ;

And that other crystal ocean
Holds its image clear,
Like a smile with soft emotion
Shining through a tear.

Faintly rings a silver laughter
As the ripples die,
And the rising stars thereafter
Answer, and their cry,

As of love to passion risen,
Passes o'er the strand
From Night's gloomy eastern prison
To the golden land

Where flushed Eve with shining fingers
For an instant keeps
Back the curtained dark, and lingers,
Lovely, ere she sleeps.

So upon the beachy margent
Love a moment stands,
Takes the ocean and the argent
Starlight on the sands ;

Takes the sunset slowly whitening
From its golden bloom,
Takes the cloud-girt summer lightning
And the distant gloom ;

Orbs them all from world-mutation,
Whole and unforgot,
Into his divine creation
Of immortal thought ;

Where, like essences supernal,
They nor pass nor range,
Lifted high in Love's eternal
O'er eternal change.

IN THE GRASS:

BY A MONAD (OF LEIBNITZ).

HERE in the grass they laid me long ago,
Far from the tumult and the tears of men,
Soft in the summer grass, forlorn and low—
The face of all the world is changed since then.

Here, on my back, and scarce beneath the turf,
To lie and lie for many a summer day,
Hearing the faint far ocean-sweeping surf,
Seeing the blue midnoon and twilight grey.

Yea, though you seek and find me not at all
In these wide meadows and the shoreward plain,
Though in the ground and tangled grasses tall
No vestige of my mortal part remain.

Yet, peradventure, where you plant your heel
And heedless start the lizard on the sand,
I am, and all day watch wild duck and teal
Fly northward in a blue-enamelled band.

Here, void of will, of action unaware,
And dwindled to a mere perceptive point,
Changeless I watch the light divide the air
And glitter on each reedy knot and joint.

Changeless I watch the changes of the sky,
Its liquid blue, its motionless light clouds,—
A solitary seagull sailing by,
A butterfly that him from sight enshrouds.

Now midway-down a thin mist thunder-driven
Moves on the air-built battlements beyond ;
Still is the land, until the heights of heaven
Burst and break backward, detonant with sound.

And on the earth fire and a flood are spilled,
The air is no more sultry, but the wind
Drives forward in the grass. The moor-fowl, chilled,
Huddle and crouch in hollows water-lined.

Then, all night long, grey spectres of the dark
Fly onward overhead in strange disguise,
With shriekings of the wind, and weird blue spark
Lighting their myriad white hail-like eyes.

But in the morning with a song the land
Resumes the primal harmony of dawn;
A lark, the latest of its tuneful band,
Into the heart of Paradise is drawn

To sing that sweet and slender hymn that I
Have heard so many ages ever new,
Never the same, yet, as the world goes by,
The same hymn steeped in sunlight and in dew.

And sometimes in the reeds a feathered thing
Will shyly peer about, as though it sought
Some old forgotten love of kindred wing
Amid the grass with last year's dead leaves fraught.

Sometimes a mouse will move, or spider thread
His amber beads betwixt the sky and me,
Sometimes a frozen swallow will fall dead,
Sometimes the southern winds will bring a bee.

Or sometimes in the later autumn days
A red-fanged rough retriever will come nigh,
Threading the scent all through that reedy maze,
And anxious, earnest, panting, pass me by.

But oftenest the world is very still ;
A light breeze o'er the land will break and shiver
With musical low melancholy thrill
Among the grasses and the reeds for ever.

I ask no more. The liquid summer light
About this poplar, when its leaves are green,
The change, when glitteringly bare and white
Its branches on the wintry blue are seen.

All are but changes of delight to me,
In each I lose myself, and live, and die,
And rise upon the next with equal glee,
Like one who feasts for ever with his eye.

I ask no more. The slender drooping grace
Of stem and blade seen thus obliquely clear
Suffice me while the moments interlace
To minutes and the minutes to a year.

The centuries soon pass, and, while I live,
The world, which without me were but a dream,
Its changing image to my mind shall give,—
One image and one aspect of its scheme.

WIND AND CLOUD.

GLIDING for ever by woodland and stream
O'er the far forest-gloom and shadow,
Spirit, or Motion—whate'er thou seem—
How do I know that thou dost not dream
By thyself in the moonlit meadow?

Sliding alone through the dim-lit grove,
Or held in the hair of the willow,
How do I know thou dost not love
The fleecy cloudlet floating above,
Asleep on thy breast as a pillow?

Cloudlet, fleeting beneath the moon,
So white from the Western Ocean,
Lovest thou not the whispered tune

That He, thy Companion, late and soon,
Murmurs with myriad emotion?

As, far below, o'er the tufted lawn
Dead leaves before him are driven;
While thou art wafted, from dusk to dawn,
In a veil of tender light withdrawn
Amid the stars of heaven.

SUMMER.

Dreaming all day, as of old, in the far-off heights of the sky,
The summer floats orbed in gold, while the hours speed silently by;
The clouds are clad as in dreams, and the air is girt with a sleep,
And the sound of its swaying seems like the wistful sigh of the deep.

The forests stand dark in the sun, and the meadows are bright between,
All gathered and melted in one, like a veil of luminous sheen,

And rolled, as a wonderful weft, o'er the purple
shoulder of Earth,
Or a bridal vesture left from moments of music
and mirth.

So all is still in the vale, all silent aloft on the wold ;
The trees have forgotten their tale, the mystical
murmur of old ;
All sound of music is done in sky and meadow and
glade,
And the whole wood sleeps in the sun, where the
sunlight sleeps in the shade.

The drowsy tips of the leaves are dipped in the heat,
as a flood,
And their idle dalliance weaves strange magic of
sleep in the blood ;
Through the tall grass spreadeth the spell and the
hours are charmed to rest—
O the spirit of Spring is well, but the silence of
Summer is best.

THE WORLD-SPIRIT.

Like soundless summer lightning seen afar,
A halo o'er the grave of all mankind,
O undefinèd dream-embosomed star,
O charm of human love and sorrow twined:

Far, far away beyond the world's bright streams,
Over the ruined spaces of the lands,
Thy beauty, floating slowly, ever seems
To shine most glorious; then from out our hands

To fade and vanish, evermore to be
Our sorrow, our sweet longing sadly borne,
Our incommunicable mystery
Shrined in the soul's long night before the morn.

Ah ! in the far fled days, how fair the sun
Fell sloping o'er the green flax by the Nile,
Kissed the slow water's breast, and glancing shone
Where laboured men and maidens, with a smile

Cheating the laggard hours ; o'er them the doves
Sailed high in evening blue ; the river-wheel
Sang, and was still ; and lamps of many loves
Were lit in hearts, long dead to woe or weal.

And, where a shady headland cleaves the light
That like a silver swan floats o'er the deep
Dark purple-stained Ægean, oft the height
Felt from of old some poet-soul upleap,

As in the womb a child before its birth,
Foreboding higher life. Of old, as now,
Smiling the calm sea slept, and woke with mirth
To kiss the strand, and slept again below.

So, from of old, o'er Athens' god-crowned steep
Or round the shattered bases of great Rome,
Fleeting and passing, as in dreamful sleep,
The shadow-peopled ages go and come :

Sounds of a far-awakened multitude,
With cry of countless voices intertwined,
Harsh strife and stormy roar of battle rude,
Labour and peaceful arts and growth of mind.

And yet, o'er all, the One through many seen,
The phantom Presence moving without fail,
Sweet sense of closelinked life and passion keen
As of the grass waving before the gale.

What art Thou, O that wast and art to be?
Ye forms that once through shady forest-glade
Or golden light-flood wandered lovingly,
What are ye? Nay, though all the past do fade,

Ye are not therefore perished, ye whom erst
The eternal Spirit struck with quick desire,
And led and beckoned onward till the first
Slow spark of life became a flaming fire.

Ye are not therefore perished: for behold
To-day ye move about us, and the same
Dark murmur of the past is forward rolled
Another age, and grows with louder fame

Unto the morrow: newer ways are ours,
  New thoughts, new fancies, and we deem our lives
New-fashioned in a mould of vaster powers;
  But as of old with flesh the spirit strives,

And we but head the strife. Soon shall the song
  That rolls all down the ages blend its voice
With our weak utterance and make us strong;
  That we, borne forward still, may still rejoice,

Fronting the wave of change. Thou who alone
  Changeless remainest, O most mighty Soul,
Hear us before we vanish! O make known
  Thyself in us, us in thy living whole.

A MEMORY.

TO ——.

FAIR friend, of the sweet hours that are no more,
Canst thou not charm from chambers of the Past
Those happy days of old, the summer wore
Like roses in her emerald zone set fast?
The dawn returns o'er ocean-meadows blue,
And still the moon in ancient splendour glows;
Alas, the mortal mind no magic knows
To render back the joys that once it knew.

Ah me! that day we sat, two souls in one,
Couched in a rocky vale, the summer hours,
And heard in trance the murmurous waters run,
And saw the sunbeam sleep amid the flowers.

A mighty boulder, cloven from the steep,
Cast on the meadow-green its silent shade,
Where we our pleasant rest together made
Till day dipped downwards on the fields of sleep.

From noon till eve the mountain shadows wheeled
And slid from slope to slope and cleft the air,
The hollow vale with laughing light was filled,
Like sunny wine that brims a flagon fair.
The barren crags gleamed moist with heavenly dew,
Forthstreaming from a thousand rills of snow
And dripping dark through mountain halls below
Or leaping with the cataract into view.

The clouds rode overhead, as in a dream,
Piled high in shifting splendour grandly calm,
Until, by magic moved, on us did seem
To fall delicious sleep, like some sweet balm
That steeps the soul in memories divine ;
And Fancy, soaring high on wings of Love,
Held revel in the heaven of hope above,
Where dawned the daystar of my life and thine.

So were the happy hours that were; but now
Only sad echoes of sweet voices heard—
Visions that flit along the rugged brow
Of that broad-featured past: like some swift bird
That touching slowly stirs a sleeping flood,
And while its broad face brightens into smiles
Is past already westward many miles,
To where the red sun sinks in fire and blood.

So pass the years, and ever in the past
Old Nature smiles at us frail houseless things;
And if in love or in derision vast
Men scarcely know; alone thy memory brings
To me a hope that cannot fail: a calm
That spreads where else despair: for in thy soul
I see the mould of Nature's mirrored whole—
One love, like thine, to shield mankind from harm.

A HAWKWEED.

Now midnoon through the woodland's leafy screen
Scarce throws a random ray ; the quiet gloom,
Spaced out in beauty and sweet sense of room
By beechen stems and slender tufts of green,
Floats like transparent incense summer-warm
Upon a deep moss floor. The fitful boom
Of swift impatient bee breaks not the charm,—
Yet lacking full completion, till an arm
Of sunlight, pointing, lingers to illume
A starlike weed, which poised in golden grace
Breaks into light—the genius of the place.

BY THE MOUTH OF THE ARNO.

HERE, where the crawling river seaward sets,
And riverward the sea, about a land
Laid under heaven in lonely flats of sand
Saltblackened, where the sluggish water frets
Its margin till marsh-deltas interlace
In reedy desolation; on each hand
The long gray grasses shiver in their grace
Through sun and shadow, till salt winds deface
Their wasted beauty: here—by such a strand—
Pale Shelley passed, and so his course did keep
To sail Death's unexplored and open deep.

SONG OF LOVE.

ARISE ! the morning breaks ; afar
The white Dawn spreads her wings o'er darkened seas,
And, robed in pearly light, upon the breeze
Rides like a silver star :
Through rosy clouds and emerald fields of sky
Her gleaming forehead forward set
And feet with foam of eastern oceans wet
Hasten their flight on high ;
And from her scarcely parted lips
Softly o'er rock and woodland slips
Love's fragrance in a sigh.

Arise ! about the ivy stirs the gale
In gentle whispers to the summer morn,
And to the bridal of the light is borne
Earth's sweetest incense. Thee we hail

O gracious Dawn, delight of all our days,
And to thy praise
Our voices rise to thee o'er hill and dale.

This day is given to Love: the rose to-day
Blushes a brighter hue: the lark on high
Carols a fuller music, to allay
A fuller ecstasy;
The sky is clothed in light from cloud to cloud,
The whole Earth sparkles in the sun,
And till the pleasant day is done
All Nature sings aloud.

Arise, my love; all Nature sings to thee:
Thine is her beauty, thine her breadth of light,
And thine the calm of evening, and of night
The nameless mystery.
Her song is of thy grace for evermore;
It fills and overflows my ears,
Hushing the harsh reverberating years
With all unlovely lore
To an enchanted tide of melody
That rises still and falls within my heart,
Till I too know myself a part
Of thy Tranquillity.

Arise ! step outwards from the shade :
To greet thy waking eyes were all things made,
And, seeing thee, all forms that pass and fade
Shall quicken into life and know
That from eternity they flow
In thy smile unafraid.

Arise, my love ; O we are one, are one ;
Fold, closer fold thine arms about my life,
That I may find in thee through worlds of strife
A calm distraught of none.
Within my heart thou movest on for aye,
A voice, a harmony divine :
Where Nature holds her hidden inmost sway,
Mixing thy soul with mine,
I see thee boundless as the boundless deep,
A pure soul flowing freely unto right,
And dowered so with Nature's changeless might
Thy star-lit course to keep.

Arise, O loved one ; with this only kiss
I seal all future years to be
Ours by most holy memory
Of this, of this.

Together love shall crown us from the skies,
Together lead us through the glad sunrise,
Together fold us when the daylight dies
In equal bliss.

This day and all days flowing hence shall be
Love's and love's only: He shall sing
New life to us from everything—
From cloud and tree,
From cliff and mountain and the dreaming sea,
From wind and waterfall,
From Earth's glad sounds, and all
Her glorious interchange of harmony;
From the year's gathered store of joy and woe,
From all the future linked to all the past,
And, where our lot is cast,
From voices bright and forms that round us flow
Swifter and swifter to the last;
Until as to the verge we run
His very self through all shall shine
Athwart the mists of earth, divine,
And blend our souls in one.

A PORTRAIT.

I SCARCELY ever learnt to know her face,
For still, whene'er I gazed, my thoughts would fly
Backward through fields of memory, in chase
Of some faint flying gleam, some kindred grace
Caught from a clearer sky.

And yet I learnt to love the smile that fled
From her sweet lips to nestle in her eye,
I loved the clustered hair about her head,
The thick dark masses which were wont to shed
A darker mystery.

I loved the marvel of her quiet days,
Her free fair confidence of happy thought :
As one who ever went about her ways
Not careless, not o'er-careful of men's praise,
Nor envious of aught ;

O great was she in woman's faith, and strong,
And she was clothed about with woman's love,
Her life was but a part of one sweet song
Which ever in low cadence moved along,
And ever so shall move.

So, as I gazed, my fetters fell to ground;
One moment like a bird uncaged I stood;
Then, soaring through th' immeasurable round,
My spirit scanned the starry depths and found
In her its only good.

LOVE'S SPRING.

My days fled ever in mechanic round,
  Enclosed within itself my spirit slept,
Till Thou didst dash my dreams; then from the ground,
  Dark, cold, and dank with night, I leapt,

And saw the circling mountain-banners blaze
  In that new-risen glory; saw the plains
Roll forth from cloud to catch the slanting rays
  That glittered in fresh-fallen rains.

So, like an ocean moon-led of high Love,
  My life swept outward from its rock-bound shore,
Nor knew of any joy except to move
  Calm in thy smile for evermore;

And as a bird, wooed by the charm of Spring,
Unfolds its tender music to the air,
Since Thou charm'st me to life, I can but sing
For very joy that thou art there.

SONG.

FARE thee well, my only fairest,
Far from sadness fare thy way ;
Though with thee my heart thou bearest,
Fairest, fare thee well for aye.

Thee no thought of grief embarrass,
Faithlessness of friend or foe,
Love consume, nor hatred harass,
Wheresoe'er on earth thou go.

Me alone thou leavest stricken,
Done to death this weary day;
So until the new life quicken,
Fairest, fare thee well for aye.

SONG.

Love, one summer day,
Sitting on a spray,
High in the liquid air did frame his note ;
All the woods were still,
Shepherds on the hill
Stayed when they heard the echoes fall and float.

And the voice of Love
So the earth did move
That the broad swelling hills did clasp and kiss ;
And the tender sky,
Quivering on high,
Stooped as to listen to that song of his.

And the singer sang
Till his music rang

Loud, louder yet, that fading land around ;
And did softly steep
All the world in sleep,
Till heaven itself grew faint with fragrant sound.

SONG.

THROUGH, through and through,
Shuttle and thread
Fly, till the silver woof
And warp are wed.

Through, through and through,
Stars on their way
Weave, till their golden flight
Fades with the day.

Through, through and through,
Mortal steps run,
Kiss, interlace, and cross,
Under the sun.

As the web's wove
Apart they fly:
Memory alone and love,
Love cannot die.

AS ROUND A LIGHTHOUSE.

TO ——.

As round a lighthouse swept of sea and air
  The waves plunge many fathom deep, and flow
  Unresting o'er the rocky base below,
And glimmer shifting in the fitful glare ;
  So great unrest about thy heart doth go,
So deep a flood of turbulent despair.

Stand true, O tender heart and strong, stand true :
  For I, who steer alone across the deep,
  By thee, unknown of thee, my course must keep
O'er the foam-crested fields for ever new ;
  And thou, alone, unknowing, on the steep,
Must watch the waves with ruin all bestrew.

Not overnear to thee my course may run ;
Yet pray I, somewhere on the bitter tide
Thy beam the shuddering night for me divide,
And show the heart-red splendour of thy sun
Reorient with delight upon the wide
Waters of gloomy death when life is done.

SLEEP, SWEETLY SLEEP.

Sleep, sweetly sleep, while I watch over thee,
O well-beloved, beneath the falling night;
Be hushed, O winds, through glade and grove and tree,
Weave silence into sweetest melody
While I watch with delight.

Sleep, sweetly sleep; and let thy softest breath
All trustfully steal forth unto the stars,
And give mine ear assurance glad that saith,—
No evil end that is akin to Death
This peaceful vision mars.

No, thou shalt wake; and though I know full well
The years shall dart between in weary dance,

Yet more I know—what none can clearly tell—
That though the strident bolts and bars of Hell
Work utmost severance,

I still to thee from age to age shall grow,
Thy name with new delight for ever twined,
Till in the distant rift that none yet know
Thy life athwart my life may inly flow,
And we be one in mind.

So Hope, that still is king when all else dies,
And Love, from whose large glory Hope is born,
Fix fast the happy star within my eyes
That shall not fade away until there rise
An universal morn.

Then sweetly sleep ! Earth, hold thy treasure fast ;
Sing, planets, marshalled round in glorious state ;
A whisper steals to me across the vast
To which I gladly bow my head at last :
I am content to wait.

TO L. C.

Ah ! when I think of thee, and how my life
Is set apart from thine that is so pure,
So much to be desired, on my soul's strife
There comes a calm ; for then I am most sure
God is, in whom our sundered days draw nigh,
—Else were't not good to live or gain to die.

THE COMPLAINT OF JOB.

CHAP. III.

O PERISH the day I was born, and the night when my
mother conceived ;
Let that day be darkness, let God regard it no
more from on high ;
Let fear fright it back to the gloom, and let it no more
be reprieved
From the shadowy challenge of death and clouds
that about it lie.

O let it no more rejoice with the light-footed days of
the year,
Let the pale moon know it no more, let it not be
reckoned as one ;

O curse it all ye that curse the day! let that night be dear
To them that pray to the Dragon that preys on the light of the Sun.

Let the stars of the twilight thereof be dark; let it long for the day,
And know it not, nor behold the fragrant eyelids of morn,
Since it shut not the doors of the womb when my mother in travail lay,
Nor hid mine eyes from the dawning light of sorrow and scorn.

Why died I not from the womb, nor gave life back to the deep?
O why was I nursed on the knee, and suckled so well at the breast?
For now should I long have lain in quiet and folded in sleep,
And gathered of old to the great assembly of them that rest:

With judges and kings of earth in their pyramid-sepulchres lone,
With mighty princes that stuffed their tombs with treasures of worth ;
So had I not been ; so had I sweet peace and nothingness known,
As infants that never saw light, as a hidden untimely birth.

Ah ! there do the wicked cease from troubling, the weary rest ;
The prisoners rest together, they hear not the tyrant's word.
Both small and great are there, the oppressor with the opprest ;
But the small man hath not fear, the servant is free from his lord.

O wherefore is sweet life given to a soul in bitterness clad ?
And wherefore light unto him whom sorrow and darkness hold ?

Who waiteth for death all day, and seeing the grave
is glad;
But finds it not though he dig for it more than hid
treasures of gold.

O wherefore light unto him whose way is wasted with
gloom,
Whom God hath girt with a hedge, that he cannot
or see or think?
O wherefore light unto me, or meat for my life, to
whom
Sighing comes sooner than bread and weeping
quicker than drink?

For even all things that I feared have alighted on me
from the air:
I have nought of rest, or peace or quiet, but trouble is
there.

THE EVERNEW.

I WALK as one who, walking through the night
From village unto village far withdrawn,
Sees here and there a light and men who wake
With confused murmur growing unto dawn.

And suddenly the birds start into song,
And cart-wheels creak along the flinty ways,
And men are in the field, and lights are out,
While the first sunbeam fills the air with praise.

So louder, as I wander through the world,
Sounds that glad anthem of the glimmering day,
And lamps of men that grope within the dark
Flash quick and quicker through the morning grey,

Ere they grow dim. O glance a thousandwise
Through cold airs wreathing round my brow,
Ye heralds of a sun, before whose face,
The whiles ye fade, men hasten forth to bow.

A LIFE.

The Child sprang into life, and smote
At his first breath with bitter note
Against the bounds of self; and saw
The myriad world, informing awe,
So stern and solid-seeming roll
With anguish on his ignorant soul,
He feared and shrank. But, as a boy,
He leapt, with some quick sense of joy
And boisterous rude bravery,
His right of heaven-born liberty
And kingship o'er the world to prove;
And won. Him, thus self-centred, Love
Kissed on the lips, and lightly drew
As in a dream his whole soul through;

And left him nevermore the same,
But, smiting with his mighty flame,
Showed all creation, lower and higher,
Transparent with that inward fire.

And so on him, the man, there stole
The gracious mystery of the soul:
First formless, then with sudden force,
The vision of the universe
Unbodied, insubstantial, grown,
And on the fading image thrown,
A magic light, that came and went,
And now, where'er his looks were bent,
Leapt blinding with bright visions, now
Waxed dim and died, he knew not how.

But when the man was old, he said:
O mighty Father, who hast led
My feeble life with kindly hand
Through all this visionary land,—
Teacher and Guardian of my lot
Still most when most I knew it not,—
Now that, once more a little child,
I to thy Will am reconciled,

Nor e'er again of grief or fear
Can dream, since I behold thee near ;—
Father, I pray thee, take once more
The soul that erst thy Sorrow bore
In pains of Love ; and let me fall
Backward, with gladness at Thy call,
Unto thy Being's depth. Behold,
E'en now thine infinite arms enfold
And I escape not ; for the air
Breathes with thy breath amid my hair ;
The myriad links of force, that draw
My sinews with the central law,
Are still but thine ; Thou from the sky
Drawest ever nigher and more nigh,
And down the avenues of sense
Glidest with ceaseless influence.
Nay, though the sense itself grow dead,
The fountain fails not at the head,
And in its secret source I feel
Thy spirit o'er my spirit steal
For ever closer, with the kiss
Of undiminished life and bliss.
Yea now I weary, let me rest
Calm in the haven of thy breast ;

The world grows distant in mine ears;
Father, to thee my soul's star nears;
And Thou that gav'st me utterance since birth,
Take back my failing frame, O ancient mother
Earth.

THE SNOWDROP.

Like a flame o'er earth and ocean
Broke the free tumultuous day,
Waking into glad commotion
Every budding spear and spray.

'Spring is here, winter is over,'
Sang the lark, and soared on high;
'Earth shall purple be with clover
Soon, beneath a summer sky.'

Then a snowdrop, pale with pleading,
Passionate with intense light,
Sprang where Spring's sweet feet were treading,
Like a herald angel white.

Quoth the lark: 'All heaven is ringing,
For the cruel frost is gone;
Snowdrop, when the birds are singing,
Why art thou so pale and wan?

'Upward to the triumph splendid
Shouldst thou lift a laughing face,
But thy tear-crowned head is bended
To the ground in lowly grace.'

And the snowdrop answered: 'Given,
I had wings of thine to soar
From the fields of earth to heaven,
I would dream of grief no more;

'But, alas! my frame is slender,
At best shapen for a sigh;
If I should behold this splendour
I have prayed for, I should die;

'For my feet are closely holden
In the darkness of my grave,
And though visions of the golden
Summer round my spirit wave,

'Yet I know that I shall perish
Ere those happy days arise,
And the visions that I cherish
Shall be shown to other eyes.

'Be it so. And since for others
All my fancies are fulfilled,
I am glad; for we are brothers.
I will live as God has willed.

'And I feel that somewhere for me
Joy fulfils itself on high;
But I look not on this glory
I have prayed for, lest I die.'

ON A CRUCIFIX

IN THE CHURCH OF ST. JOHN LATERAN, ROME.

STILL, still they crucify thee, O great Christ.
They took thee from thy cross on Calvary,
And nailed thee in a splendid place unpriced
Of malachite and gold and porphyry.
They counted all the wounds thy body bore,
They measured all the hours of misery,
On spear and reed and sponge they set great store :
Still, still they crucify thee, gentle Christ.

They used thy name, because thou wast so meek,
To be the watchword of all godless pride ;
Because thou wast so gracious to the weak,
They held thy flaming cross up far and wide,

A curse and terror in the common street
To poor and ignorant and world-untried,
And then they came and crouched and kissed thy feet,
With folded hands and lips slavish and sleek.

Still, still they crucify thee, who didst say
Suffer the little ones to come to me,
Whose heart with love beguiled the beaten way,
And made all men behold thee joyfully;
For now they wave away the vulgar crowd,
No simple child of man may come nigh thee:
With obscure rites and incantations loud
They crucify thy love fresh every day.

Once, where the churches offer stones for bread,
And in their Holy Place call darkness light,
Thy sun-like truth-revealing presence shed
Shame on each false and Pharisaic rite;
Till, as thy lustre more intensely shone,
They took thee from thy chosen lowly site,
And set thee for their own especial sun,
And called thee by the name of Church's Head.

And now, when in an aisle loud trumpets bray,
And facing thee the priests go to and fro,
And, distanced off, the kneeling people pray
And breathe thy name in trembling accents low:
High o'er the incense and the altar cloud,
Afar, and folded in thine own great woe,
Alone, thy head in deep dejection bowed,
Great Christ, they crucify thee every day.

Thy face is turned aside from all that scene,
Thine eyes are weary of their age-long gaze,
Thy frame is worn, thy shrunken limbs grow lean,
Thou seem'st to tremble at the song of praise;
For here, and in thy name, the evil word,
The ban, the curse, and damning pious phrase,
Century after century were heard,
Christ, as if thou their Counsellor hadst been.

So long? These twice ten hundred years, O Christ?
Hath no one yet come near to lift thee down?
Hath no one yet thy holy spirit priced
Above the three nails and the thorny crown?

Thy seamless robe the Roman soldiers took,
But these have woven thee another gown
Of all thy bitter shame and sharp rebuke
Wherein to crucify thee still, great Christ.

Slowly the days run on, the time is long,
The kneeling generations come and go,
Thy word is to them as an empty gong,
They look upon thee, but they do not know.
Thine arms, wide-spread for all the world's embrace,
Are empty evermore of friend or foe,
Still, still set stiff and rigid in their place,
And straightened back from love with rivets strong.

Ah, surely in the seeming endless years
Some momentary glance hath gladdened thee,
Some smile of recognition reached through tears
Hath shed light on thy later Calvary.
Yet is thy love more like a thing untold,
To stay and suffer still so patiently,
By suffering to overcome the cold
Heart of estrangement of thy loved compeers.

And now, the end, what is it? For each day
The magic ceremonious circle, drawn
Betwixt thee and the people, doth betray
Less room for love and more for serge and lawn;
The world grows weary seeking thee in vain,
And leaves thee to the priests, who self-withdrawn
In secret pride find popular disdain
And pitiful desertion and dismay.

The Papal pride has triumphed: it has set
Itself for thee. The world has turned away.
The Papal pride has fallen. Wilt thou yet
Remain to lead us in this later day?
Or will thy name, as something that is not,
Pass from the ears of men unlearned to pray,
Thy centuries of suffering forgot,
Thy love to men for evermore unmet?

Ah! greater is thy love than this, great Christ.
Thou givest, but thou askest not again;
And though our wayward worship be enticed
To other shrines, thy spirit shall remain,

Unknown, to breathe upon us purer life,
Refine us with the flame of earthly pain,
Until, our hearts with thine no more at strife,
We learn how not to crucify thee, Christ.

THE GREAT PEEPSHOW.

I.

WALK up ! walk up ! This way to see the world !
Scant time allowed, must make the best of it :
Seventy years or so : your hair'll be curled
Before that, though, with two or three sights fit
To set your eyes wide open—if you've wit,
That is to say, to win in the great strife
For bare existence 'gainst each brother chit—
To keep one eye upon the slide of life,
As 'twere an instant, ere death hood you with his coif.

II.

Walk up ! walk up ! Well, you're a stranger now ;
But that won't last. It's excellent rare fun
Up here ; but as we've much to see, allow
Me to begin at once. Now, there's the Sun.

Where you come from I doubt that there was one
Or aught to match it ; 'tis too far to touch,
But has its use, natheless, which is to run
From end to end of heaven, and give rays such
As may suffice to warm and light our earthly hutch.

III.

It shines by day and is obscured at night—
A capital arrangement, such as I
Should have suggested if the Infinite
Had asked my counsel. If you ask me why,
'Tis clear 'twould not have suited men to lie
Abed with sun full-orbed at midnight blaze
And work their days by gaslight. We descry
Throughout these things the providential ways,
And are prepared in all to render them due praise.

IV.

Walk up ! walk up ! There's plenty more to see
By this said sun's rays—simple and sublime.
The world's a show which is, you'll all agree,
The greatest ever advertised in rhyme,—

We've had the management of it some time
And can explain it fully ;—and to-day
'Tis not too much to say 'tis in its prime ;
Admission free—that is, if you obey
Our fatherly direction, there is nought to pay.

v.

Move with the rest, and do not stop to gaze
Too long or closely. All is very good :
So the Creator said—in some amaze
At his own skill. Besides, in any mood,
Doubting or not, 'tis deemed a little rude
To look a gift-horse in the mouth. Move on :
And thank your planets—as indeed you should—
That you have got such good advice to con,
For which the world were worthy visiting, alone.

vi.

Your eyes are caught at first by empty shows—
Bright colours, smiling faces, forms of grace.
To chase gold butterflies by green hedgerows,
To play regardless both of time and space

In unrestricted freedom, and to race
Propriety and prudence out of breath,
Seem pleasant and surprisingly in place
In this fair world where, as the preacher saith,
What profits he that works in that he laboureth?

VII.

But look around you, and you'll soon perceive
Your judgment is at fault, and, once for all,
'Tis best surrender freedom and not grieve,
But bend your neck demurely to the thrall—
Remembering the weak *must* take the wall.
And get by rote, if not by heart, the themes
Which age and ancient custom learning call,
And leave enthusiastic youthful dreams,
To labour for what is and not for that which seems.

VIII.

Such labour profits. Since it pleased the Lord
To shut us out of Paradise, the sweat
Of each man's brow alone secures reward
(His or another's); and we need not fret.

The bargain's just, for if we do not get
Interest, we get profits, which are more.
Life's interest is Nature's secret, set
In untrod plains, and if all pleasant lore
Is there, Knowledge and Life,—an Eden-land whereo'er

IX.

The sun of freedom shines—still, here is gold,
Which, after all, surpasses any sun :
For without light were nothing to behold,
But without this is nothing to be done.
Therefore seek first for gold, and therefore shun
Unthrifty habits or excessive vice :
Honesty's best policy in the long run,
Dishonour ruins credit in a trice,
And virtue, being its own reward, thus pays you twice.

X.

Yet all with moderation. We, who came
Into the world and learned our lesson flush
Ere you were thought of, have the prior claim
In law as well as profits. Do not push !

As if gold were the very flaming bush.
Order ! If there's not room, why, some must wait ;
First comers first : 'tis just. And I'll not blush
To say I've tarried yearlong for a great
Opening which now the due rotation brings—though late.

XI.

Nay, do not push. Ah ! Vengeance on you all !
'Tis lost. What greediness !—a vulgar crowd
Pressing and trampling forward—I shall fall.
Help ! hear me ! Here is hard cash : I'm not proud.
In vain. All lost. Before my eyes a cloud
Hides the great show, the scene becomes obscure.
I could have wished that chance had been allowed ;
But no, the risk of limb outweighed the lure,—
And, taking all in all, the show's a little poor.

XII.

Adieu. See how they fight ! So has it been
Since the beginning, as if unaware
The panorama's but a shifting scene,
And all its wonders only empty air.

Hear me, my friends. Believe me that I bear
No grudge against you, but would have you know,
For your own good, the lust of gold's a snare.
The world's no shop, but only a peepshow:
What's seen or handled you surrender when you go.

XIII.

Carry him out! more room! come up behind!
One peephole vacant! now the show's at height.
Strange, that our predecessors—though not blind—
Ne'er fully saw or understood the sight,
Withal so anxious to display their light
For our illumination! But away:
Our time for all such questioning is quite
Too limited. Enough, while yet 'tis day,
To use the precious hours. Let night come when it may.

THE CARPENTER AND THE KING.

A Carpenter upon a day
  Did call upon a King;
The King exclaimed: 'The Queen's away,
  Can I do anything?'

'You can,' the Carpenter replied,
  'I want a bit of bread.'
'Why?' cried the King; the fellow sighed:
  'I'm hungry, sire,' he said.

'Dear me! I'll call my Chancellor,
  He understands such things;
Your claims I cannot cancel, or
  Deem them fit themes for kings.

'Sir Chancellor, why here's a wretch
Starving—like rats or mice!'
The Chancellor replied: 'I'll fetch
The Steward in a trice.'

The Steward came, and by his look
You might have guessed he'd shirk;
Said he: 'Your Majesty's mistook,
This is the Butler's work.'

The Butler said the case was bad,
But quite beyond his power,
Seeing it was the Baker had
The keys of cake and flour.

The Baker called,—'The keys I've lost,'
He wept; 'but in a span
I'll call the Carp—— why, Holy Ghost!
Here is the very man.'

'Hurrah! hurrah!' they loudly cried,
'How cleverly we've done it!
We've solved this question deep and wide
Well nigh ere we'd begun it.'

'Thanks!' said the Carpenter; 'meanwhile
Go moulder on the shelf:
The next time I am starving I'll
Take leave to help myself.'

THE LOCOMOTIVE.

With a rush and a roar, thro' the wind and the rain,
I flash in the light and vanish again,
Where dim to the passenger through the wet pane
A wayside station appears.
'Tis night : all is silent and still. With a scream
I waken the signalman out of his dream ;
And his lamps like the flash of a meteor seem
To the passenger wight as he peers.

Then forward, with flaming front and a bound,
I leap on the dark and devour the ground,
And the night recedes in front and around,
And closes upon me behind ;
Where, caught in a terrible whirlwind of wheels,
The earth falls dizzily backward and reels

And rises in clouds of dust on my heels,
With dead leaves blown on the wind.

On, into the night, through echoing arch
And loud resounding tunnel I march ;
By misty forests of fir and larch,
And over the wind-swept ridge ;
And the passenger-mortal, as morning appears,
Half wakes in a world of indefinite fears
And drowsily falls back asleep as he hears
The sound of my feet on the bridge.

A thousand shocks are shattered to one
As over the resonant metals I run
With a storm of sounds enough to stun
The ears of a marble bust.
A swerve, a slip, and that slender life
Is shorn asunder as with a sharp knife,
Or battered from knowledge of brother or wife,
And cast away in the dust.

Yet I am not I to will this thing,
But man arose like a masterful king,

Put fire for my heart, a wheel for wing,
And breathed his breath in my mouth;
And bade me hurry at his behest
With eager feet forgetful of rest
To bear him for ever from East to West,
To bear him from North to South.

So whenever I faint, or falter, or tire,
I feel and know in my heart the fire
Of man my master's fierce desire
Impels me forward again.
Let him cling to me now as best he can,
But blame me not if I be his ban,
For since I was made the servant of man
I am unmindful of men.

A PROPHECY.

With lifted head and high prophetic mouth
Half-opened, in the days of nations' drouth
She gave her voice to heaven ; and all the land
Stood round expectant, as the people stand
To hear a Sibyl speak of peace or war.
So in those summer days did she declare
Rain upon Earth ; and as the people prayed
Long, loudly and prophetically brayed.

ONLY A SMILE.

Only a smile, from one of a crowd,
Because the world was rainy and loud,
And the wind ran gustily down the street
With buffeting dance of boisterous feet;
Only a smile, but passing sweet,
For the world was rainy and loud.

Only a smile, not anything more,
For further response the rude wind bore
High out of our reach. Yet unto us straight
The strong world stooped, as a slave, in its state,
At the token of that which is passing great,
A smile, not anything more.

THE FELLOWSHIP OF HUMANITY.

As one who, late at eve returning home
Under the stars, hears on the common road
A fellow-footstep fall, and sees one come
Dimly, he knows not whom, nor can forebode ;

But cries to him 'God speed thee,' and is glad
Hearing his restful answer through the night,
And dreams of love, and though his heart be sad
Feels darkly some strange instinct of delight :

So I to thee. If on this earthly way
Our paths had lain together, I perchance
In the sweet sunlight had beheld thy day
And known thee as thou art—as in a trance,—

And loved thee, and thou me. But seeing now
Sad night compels us, and our way is won
Though ignorance and blindness to the brow
Of that fair mountain of the morning Sun

Whence Truth is manifest, let us remain
In word and action strangers, yet in heart
One and well-known by every joy and pain
That makes divine our little human part.

THE FELLOWSHIP OF SUFFERING.

O WEARY child of man, O mortal friend,
Afar, unseen, by road or river bend,
By mountain, plain, or city, still the same,
Human, unfriended, with the piercing flame
Of endless sorrow in thine aching heart:
Hear me, for unto thee my spirit yearns;
Touch me, behold me, where the twilight t
Uplifting white arms to the tireless morn:
Hear me, for in thy torment I am torn;
Hear me, for in thy passion I have part.

O child, O child, how sadly sang the world
Its old old song of keen cold carelessness,
How blindly blew the wind of loneliness
About thy soul in frozen garments furled;

How with pale speechless lips and wan didst pace
Crushing beneath thy days that deadly feud ;
How to the bitter wall didst turn thy face,
Glad from the glances of the multitude.

Ah ! here or there ; the same sad song of woe,
More desolate than world-despair or death,
The cry of souls the cruel sun severeth,
The moan of love to madness smitten low.
Ah, here or there ; the same sad end of things,
The same fond fruitless ineffectual life,
High-feathered hope and passionate pulse of wings,
Chill sorrow, failure, and despairing strife.

Behold ! beyond the mountains of the West,
Where sparkle white domes of the purple hills,
The light of evening Earth's broad bosom fills
And like a golden dove broods o'er her breast,
And fades, afar—for you and me, afar,—
Shared token of our common deep desire,
Which fadeth not, but like a beacon-star
Devours the darkness of our hearts with fire.

THE DIVINE SORROW.

To-morrow, when the sun is sunken,
And the seawave ebbs afar,
If thy heart be cold and shrunken
And thy hope too like a star

That glitters faintly, glitters coldly,
In the farthest fields of space,
While the night airs, blowing boldly,
Bring their cloudy train apace;

If the seeming sad insistance
Of the years oppress thy soul,
As from distance unto distance,
Past and future, still they roll;

And thy forward glances eager
  Aid not, nor the backward cast,
Seeing all is mute and meagre—
  And the future as the past;

If in all this fate betide thee
  That no voice hath called thee 'friend,'
Nature bitterly belied thee
  From the wretched end to end;

Even so grieve not, for only
  So shalt thou divine the deep
And the height; find for the lonely
  Love, and tears for them that weep.

THE DIVINE LOVE.

CHILD, the hours that breathe around thee
Know thee most divinely fair ;
In its love the last enwound thee,
And the next shall take thy hair

Backward from thy forehead's whiteness
While upon thy lips it fold
Kisses, love-endued with lightness
Lest thou guess what none have told.

Though thou seest not nor knowest,
Love about thee, day by day,
Dwells and, whereso'er thou goest,
Walks beside thee all the way ;

Tenderly his glances greet thee,
And his words about thee weave ;
Even the winds and waters meet thee
Always, only, by love's leave.

Yea, though none can shape or show it,
Though no mortal logic prove,
Love himself doth surely know it :
Thou shalt, when thou knowest Love.

THE ANGEL OF DEATH—AND LIFE.

I CALL thee in all hours of life and death :
Friend, whom the days hide and the months and years
Darken before my face : I call and cry
Still, as of old time, ere the morning star
Mounts in the moonlit heavens ; and still, ere dawn
Visits the vale of sleep, I call to thee.
Friend, like a stranger loved and known before,
Or brother long forgot, with intricate
World-written countenance, obscure to read,
Yet flashing ancient meanings : thou, for whom,
Morning and night, with ever-new desire,
I, waiting, watch without the gates of Time,
If haply at length thy vagrant feet efface
The way of our estrangement : yea, O thou,

Who in that way's delay decipherest
These words of my great need, I call to Thee.

O wilt thou hear me : know that night by night
I dwell beside thee, and before the dawn
Touch thy loved forehead with my lips, and fill
With joy each hour of waking. Evernear
I gaze upon thee as thou goest forth
To each day's due encounter ; step by step,
And hour by hour, each stroke of all thy work
Wears out the world to more transparency
Between us. Even now the flinty way,
Flaming beneath thy feet, is grown like glass ;
My glance is on thee from the well-turned field,
The mill, the net, the loom, and woven stuff,
From desk and counter and rock-quarried gold,
Waste seas and stormbeat headlands, and from all
The faces of thine enemies in the fight—
Strike home : the stroke is fair for me and thee.
Nay, from these words I spring to meet thy soul,
Which else were lonely in the world of men ;
O take them as the token of a love
Within, without thee, Lord and minister,

Unknown, of all thy actions, until death
Reveal it, visual, thine, the perfect life.

Yea, now I call to Love that is in thee,
And cry, as one that sees her shadow pass
And the lamp flash, waiting without the house
For his fair one at the window: O come forth,
That I may see thee as thou art, and hear
Thy hidden thought, and hold thy very self
In presence undisturbed. Thou art descried:
Thy light is beauty and can not be hid;
But, through the tangle of frail purposes
That fringe the lattice windows of thy life,
Shines to perpetual promise. Fear thou not.
Ay, though I come clad grimly as for war,
In brazen heat or scaly northern cold,
By rock or river, famine, hatred, fire;
Though I assail thee at the cannon's mouth,
Or drag thee down to listless years of pain,
Arise thou, and with forehead unabashed
Come forth, and so confront me. In that day,
Thine eyes, beholding mine, within their depths
Shall see, resurgent from the past, all forms
Of long-lost joy and lovely memory,

All faces and fair smiles of time, set forth
And forward in the future ; all else fled.
O stand and conquer so : for see, I touch
Thee through this outer world, in the hot Sun
I slay thee with my lips, all day to thee
I whisper in the Light, and to myself
Desirous draw thee in the Lightning flash,
Arrayed in death. Arise and vanquish me :
Grasp firm my tangled hair, brandish thy sword,
Breathe heavily thy hot breath in my ears,
And I will yield ; and thou shalt know that Love
Stands ever by thy side though Life and Death,
Signing allegiance of a thousand hearts
That still are One.
O hear my voice once more.
I am with thee. Rise up, thy duty calls ;
Pass down into the world ; I am with thee.

SONNETS

I.

GENOA.

WHERE Genoa spreads white arms crescent-wise,
Her feet o'er well-packed bale and polished spar
Step on the quay with men of every star.
Her heart stays with her people ; but her eyes
From those high garden-terraces devise
New realms of peaceful conquest, where afar
Ocean's white horses at the harbour bar
Wait ever for their rider to arise.

Here boy Columbus stood, and o'er the blue
Immeasurable fields imagined new.
Here young Mazzini, while for men he yearned,
Another world within their eyes discerned—
The one Republic without place or date.
So both for men lived,—and died execrate.

II.

BEETHOVEN.

Betwixt the actual and unseen, alone,
Companionless, deaf, in dread solitude
Of soul amid the faithless multitude,
He lived, and fought with life, and held his own;
Knew poverty, and shame which is not shown,
Pride, doubt, and secret heart-despair of good,—
Insolent praise of men and petty feud;
Yet fell not from his purpose, framed and known.

For, as a lonely watcher of the night,
When all men sleep, sees the tumultuous stars
Move forward from the deep in squadrons bright,
And notes them, he through this life's prison bars
Heard all night long the spheric music clear
Beat on his heart,—and lived that men might hear.

III.

IN MORTEM F. D. MAURICE.

So day by day my life, thus nearer drawn
Down the dark avenues unto the dawn,
Cries to Thee : O Lord, Lord of life and death,
Whom from our gaze the sad night sundereth,
Reveal Thyself ; be unto us no more
A darkly felt thick darkness by the shore ;
But like the wind, that wingeth cold and clear
Before the dawn by meadow-land and mere,
Blow on us ; scatter from our sickly brains
The feverish fancies that ill conscience feigns ;
Raise us to stand like men to meet the strife,
Fearless and grand, because within thy life
Our lives are hidden,—as is his to-day,
Thy servant who from sight hath passed away.

April 1872.

IV.

WILLIAM SMITH

(AUTHOR OF 'THORNDALE,' ETC.)

SUCH courage in so sensitive a frame
Had given the world rebuke, but that it came
In such light exquisite companionship
Of gentle glance and laughter-loving lip
That few, beholding, could forebode the force
Wherewith that inward current kept its course
In wave-like large emotion, calm and free,
Towards Truth, the high compelling deity.

So when, obedient to the heavenly guide,
Night-long the sea with stedfast-flowing tide
Rises along the land and searches o'er
Each bay and inlet of its bounding shore,
The moving goddess doth her empire trace
In lines of silver laughter on its face.

V.

INSCRIBED ON A GRAVE:

TO THE READER.

O CHILD of light and shadow: though I pass,
The mountains and the plains where we two played
Our part of earthly pleasance still are laid
Out in the open world of sun and grass,—
For thy fruition. Not in stone or brass
Seek any sign of me. Let no tear braid
Thy light-fringed lids because my path is made
Beyond the bounds thy sight cannot surpass.

Turn thee again unto the sunlit plain,
Let all pure influences of the air
And sweet sad fellowship of mortal pain
Wreathe round thy head immortal fancies fair.
Where'er suns rise on men or late moons wane,
I leave thee at this stone to meet thee there.

VI.

DEATH.

Since, small or great, and every man on earth,
Must know thee at the last, thy lonely gloom
Is bright with something of diviner birth—
The lamp of human love, that o'er our doom
Sheds undivided radiance. For in this
Our modern world of finely graded life,
The soul is nursed knowing nothing of the bliss
Of sorrow borne, since human. In this strife
Of complex individual interests
Poor man and princely, side by side, share not
One pain or passion of a common lot,
Till death, more liberal than life, invests
All men alike in his wide winding-sheet,
And in that suit of sorrow makes them meet.

VII.

Thy presence is the sun. Yet since the swift
Insistance of strong fate compels me turn
My face unto the land where I shall learn
By loss of thee the value of Love's gift ;
Since in the sky thy light no more shall lift
Its beam afront, but on my shoulder burn
Like some familiar hand which may not earn
Answer of look or smile by any shift ;—

I lose thee ; but not wholly. For I see
Thy light fall past me down the shining ways
On all this happy land of grass and tree
And cloud, which takes thy semblance from its rays,
Where'er th' invisual sun of memory
Upon the actual world about me plays.

VIII.

Since, in thine hour of sorrow, unto thee
Came sweet remembrance of the summer sea
And one who sat beside it—in his eyes
The far-off thought of sea and summer skies:
Since in thine heart the visionary gleam
Of one half-wasted life, more like a dream,
Pale in its pleading, stood to be the sign
Of Love, as Love is, passionate, divine:
Ah! since in all this world no fuller sound
Than my faint spirit's utterance was found
Bidding thee cherish hope: so let it be.
Behold, beyond the summer and the sea
I utter not myself, but am His voice
Who bids all Nature live, and thee rejoice.

IX.

Though I should never see thy face again,
Thy love in my remembrance shall remain
Purer than driven snow, than flameless fire
More stedfastly intense, than silver lyre
More sweetly magic-laden, than young mirth
More reckless of the sordid rules of earth,
More simple than the daisy in the grass,
Whereby a weary traveller doth pass
Nor knoweth, till he haply thinks thereon,
What wealth of subtle grace his heart hath won.
Fairer than all of these, thy love to me
Seems so surpassing fair that I would be
Endued with every grace, and for thy sake
From each fond thought of thee fresh beauty take.

X.

SEVERANCE.

My life thy life unto itself doth fold
Closer than death. My soul clasps all of thine,
As in the bud rose-petals intertwine
Before the light divides them. I behold
Deep in the mystic shadow-caverns shine
Thine image on the fire-fed sources cold
Whereby my spirit dwells; and with the old
Foreboding unforgotten, dream divine,
Thou dost disturb me. Yet the dim-lit day
Dawns down between us, staring face to face,
Strange as the stormy Atlantic; with swift pace
We tread the track which sets our steps astray;
Thy lips are mute; mine move not; evermore
I wait and wearily knock at Death's dark door.

XI.

TO A FAINT SOUL.

Sleep on, O soul! O delicate soul, sleep!
Thy life is calm and thickly fenced from care,
Thy couch is soft, and roses scattered there
Nurse thy quick senses while the night hours creep.
Around thee sway dim shadows of the deep,
Around thee circle sounds and visions fair,
And rise and wave their arms, and lull thee, where
Thou dreamest, ever deeply hid in sleep.
Vainly for thee the morning spreads her bright
Broad belt of heaven about the eastern shore;
Vainly for thee earth's fragrant odours pour
In clouds of incense up the arch of night.
Dream on, for eyes thou hast and canst not see;
Sleep on, O delicate soul, endlessly.

XII.

THE LARGER LIFE.

HERE, where the warm sun circles thy slight frame,
As water holds a swimmer in the sea,
And thousand sparkling beams from grass and tree
Exalt thy life and gird thee with the flame
Of Nature's vigour: here, in Nature's name
And God's, stretch high thy hands and wide, to be
Th' acceptance of this nobler unity;
Nor fear henceforth. For higher is this claim,
And worthier, than thine own life's; therefore feel
Its vibrant influence down thy fingers creep,
Rejoicing; for thee let each sunbeam seal
God's kiss upon thy lips; and if the sleep
Of weary limbs the way of Death reveal,
'Tis God himself who calls from deep to deep.

XIII.

IT SHALL BE.

It shall be. Although far away the sound
Dies in the infinite silence of the sky,
Although obscure, and hid in the profound,
Our days stream outwards, onwards, and pass by.
It shall be. Behold, a new world is made
Out of the old, and the old dieth not ;
For though the mountain-forms and flowers fade,
Ageless remains the far-informing Thought.
Ah ! when this troublous dream and mortal sleep
Fades from our eyelids, and the end is near,
Down through the spaceless void and starry steep
Instinct with Love the dreaming soul shall hear
One whispered word ; and all the past shall be
Up-gathered into Love's eternity.

XIV.

WALDSTEIN SONATA. BEETHOVEN.

O CHANGELESS in thy beauty, stedfast, strong,
Exultant in the calm of victory,
A mighty poet flung thee forth, to be
A part of Nature. So that I, thus long
Listening to thy majestic voices, dream
Of some vast snow-veiled mountain far away,
Whose front is crimson fire at orient day;
Where in the dark Dian's silver lances gleam;
Where shadows of the tireless storm-wreathed mist
Move on in changeless interchange; where call
Clamorous echoes of the waterfall
From crag to crag; whom Night alone hath kissed,
And everlasting silence, and the far
Glimmering magic of the Morning star.

LONDON: PRINTED BY
SPOTTISWOODE AND CO., NEW-STREET SQUARE
AND PARLIAMENT STREET

NEW POETRY

PUBLISHED BY

MESSRS. HENRY S. KING & CO.

A TALE OF THE SEA, SONNETS, AND OTHER POEMS. By JAMES HOWELL. Crown 8vo. cloth, 5*s.*

IMITATIONS FROM THE GERMAN OF SPITTA AND TERSTEGEN. By Lady DURAND. Crown 8vo. 4*s.*

'An acceptable addition to the religious poetry of the day.' COURANT.

EASTERN LEGENDS AND STORIES IN ENGLISH VERSE. By Lieutenant NORTON POWLETT, Royal Artillery. Crown 8vo. 5*s.*

'Have we at length found a successor to Thomas Ingoldsby? We are almost inclined to hope so after reading "Eastern Legends." There is a rollicking sense of fun about the stories, joined to marvellous power of rhyming, and plenty of swing, which irresistibly reminds us of our old favourite.' GRAPHIC.

EDITH; or, Love and Life in Cheshire. By T. ASHE, Author of the 'Sorrows of Hypsipylé,' etc. Sewed. Price 6*d.*

'A really fine poem, full of tender, subtle touches of feeling.'
MANCHESTER NEWS.

'Pregnant from beginning to end with the results of careful observation and imaginative power.' CHESTER CHRONICLE.

THE GALLERY OF PIGEONS, AND OTHER POEMS. By THEO. MARZIALS. Crown 8vo. 4*s.* 6*d.*

'A conceit abounding in prettiness.' EXAMINER.

'Contains as clear evidence as a book can contain that its composition was a source of keen and legitimate enjoyment. The rush of fresh, sparkling fancies is too rapid, too sustained, too abundant, not to be spontaneous.'
ACADEMY.

ASPROMONTE, AND OTHER POEMS. Second Edition, cloth, *4s. 6d.*

'The volume is anonymous, but there is no reason for the author to be ashamed of it. The 'Poems of Italy' are evidently inspired by genuine enthusiasm in the cause espoused; and one of them, "The Execution of Felice Orsini," has much poetic merit, the event celebrated being told with dramatic force.' ATHENÆUM.

'The verse is fluent and free.' SPECTATOR.

THE DREAM AND THE DEED, AND OTHER POEMS. By PATRICK SCOTT, Author of 'Footpaths between Two Worlds,' etc. Fcp. 8vo. cloth, *5s.*

'A bitter and able satire on the vice and follies of the day, literary, social, and political.' STANDARD.

'Shows real poetic power coupled with evidences of satirical energy.' EDINBURGH DAILY REVIEW.

THE LEGENDS OF ST. PATRICK, AND OTHER POEMS. By AUBREY DE VERE. Crown 8vo. *5s.*

'Mr. De Vere's versification in his earlier poems is characterised by great sweetness and simplicity. He is master of his instrument, and rarely offends the ear with false notes. Poems such as these scarcely admit of quotation, for their charm is not, and ought not to be, found in isolated passages; but we can promise the patient and thoughtful reader much pleasure in the perusal of this volume.' PALL MALL GAZETTE.

'We have marked, in almost every page, excellent touches from which we know not how to select. We have but space to commend the varied structure of his verse, the carefulness of his grammar, and his excellent English. All who believe that poetry should raise and not debase the social ideal, all who think that wit should exalt our standard of thought and manners, must welcome this contribution at once to our knowledge of the past and to the science of noble life.' SATURDAY REVIEW.

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT'S POEMS. Red-line Edition. Handsomely bound. With Illustrations and Portrait of the Author. Price *7s. 6d.* A Cheaper Edition, price *3s. 6d.* These are the only complete English Editions sanctioned by the Author.

HENRY S. KING & CO.

65 Cornhill and 12 Paternoster Row, London.

BURN
CO.